

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES & Sketches



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FORES'S
SPORTING NOTES
AND
SKETCHES.

FORES'S

SPORTING NOTES
&

Sketches

A Quarterly Magazine

DESCRIPTIVE OF

BRITISH AND FOREIGN SPORT.

ILLUSTRATED BY

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CUTHBERT BRADLEY,

AND OTHERS

VOLUME IV.

1887-1888.

LONDON:

MESSRS. FORES, PICCADILLY, W.

1888.

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LONDON :

LONDON:
Printed by STRANGEWAYS & SONS, Tower Street Cambridge Circus.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
STEEPLECHASING IN IRELAND	1
<i>By 'LARKY GRIGG.'</i>	
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACROSS COUNTRY	10
<i>By 'A CAMBRIDGE BLUE.'</i>	
THE RIVER FOR EVER!	18
<i>By Capt. ALAXENDER CLARK KENNEDY, F.R.G.S.</i>	
CAUGHT NAPPING	20
<i>By FINCH MASON.</i>	
A NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE	26
<i>By G. H. JALLAND.</i>	
THE OVAL BALL	33
<i>By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'</i>	
THE OLD STAGE-COACHMAN'S STORY	35
<i>By F. GALE.</i>	
OLD OXFORD DAYS	40
<i>By 'PECKWATER.'</i>	
THE GALLOPING WHIP	47
<i>By 'BROOKSBY.'</i>	
JOHN PEEL'S GREY COAT	48
<i>By 'ROCKWOOD.'</i>	
JUNGLE JOTTINGS	52
<i>By 'DOOKER.'</i>	
THE PRINCE OF THE HEAVIES	60
<i>By 'TOM MARKLAND.'</i>	
THE FAREWELL FEAST OF FISTIANA	62
<i>By 'AN OUTSIDER.'</i>	
MY COUSIN ADA	65
<i>By C. H. HAMILTON.</i>	
UNDER THE STARTER	77
<i>By 'A TURFITE.'</i>	
OLD OXFORD DAYS	81
<i>By 'PECKWATER.'</i>	
A NARROW ESCAPE	89
<i>By G. H. JALLAND.</i>	
HURRAH FOR THE HEATHER!	94
<i>By Capt. CLARK KENNEDY, F.R.G.S.</i>	
FROM COWES TO CAPE WRATH	96
<i>By 'ROCKWOOD.'</i>	
MY LAST KANGAROO HUNT	108
<i>By 'BOOMER.'</i>	
THE RIVAL ROSES	115
<i>By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'</i>	
MY FIRST APPEARANCE IN SILK	116
<i>By 'MARMADUKE MUFFE.'</i>	
A SAIL ON A RAILROAD	124
<i>By 'WILF POCKLINGTON.'</i>	
THE AULD FISHER'S JUBILEE SONG	128
<i>By T. DYKES.</i>	
REMINISCENCES OF A RIFLE IN THE ROCKIES	128
<i>By 'TRIVIATOR.'</i>	

	PAGE
'WHO SAID RATS?'	134
<i>By</i> CUTHBERT BRADLEY.	
THE CHESTNUT PAIR	141
<i>By</i> E. M. FARWELL.	
FRANK SIMKINSON'S DEBUT	153
<i>By</i> FINCH MASON.	
THE MAD PERCHERON	163
<i>By</i> G. H. JALLAND.	
THE KING OF THE WOODLAND GLADE	168
<i>By</i> 'LONGTAIL.'	
SUNSHINE AND SHADOW	169
<i>By</i> Mrs. CHAWORTH MUSTERS.	
THE KICKING POLO PONY	174
<i>By</i> CUTHBERT BRADLEY.	
SONG OF THE LEASH	182
<i>By</i> 'SAPLING.'	
THE SQUIRE'S DAUGHTER	183
<i>By</i> 'WILF POCKLINGTON.'	
JUNGLE JOTTINGS	188
<i>By</i> 'DOOKER.'	
TOODLEBURY'S TANDEM TEAM	196
<i>By</i> T. DYKES.	
AFTER FEROX	202
<i>By</i> R. M. ALEXANDER.	
THE MERRY, MERRY MAIN	208
<i>By</i> 'TOM MARKLAND.'	
SIR GERARD'S DOUBLE EVENT	210
<i>By</i> 'UMBRA.'	
OLD OXFORD DAYS	227
<i>By</i> 'PECKWATER.'	
SHANKS'S PONY	234
<i>By</i> CUTHBERT BEDE.	
COACHING AND COCK-FIGHTING	238
<i>By</i> 'ROCKWOOD.'	
THE SILVER HOOK	243
<i>By</i> 'KINGFISHER.'	
'HOW HE WON HER'	245
<i>By</i> FINCH MASON.	
THE SMARTEST WHIPPER-IN IN ENGLAND	253
<i>By</i> CUTHBERT BRADLEY.	
THE RANKSBORO' POUND	262
<i>By</i> 'TOM MARKLAND.'	
MR. JORKINS' FISHING-ROD	264
<i>By</i> J. HARRINGTON KEENE.	
STEEPLECHASING IN IRELAND	269
<i>By</i> 'LARKY GRIGG.'	
TOM BLANCHARD'S FIRST WOODCOCK	278
<i>By</i> 'BREECHLOADER.'	
THE ROPSLEY RUN	284
<i>By</i> 'OLD CHARLEY.'	
DAN SEFFERT'S EXPERIENCES	285
<i>By</i> 'H. H.'	
A MERRY MILL	292
<i>By</i> 'FUSBOS.'	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
‘HERE COMES “THE LAMB!”’ <i>to face</i>	I
‘“WHO-HOOP! CAMBRIDGE HAS IT!”’	16
‘IN THE PADDOCK’	24
‘AND SET OFF DOWN HILL FULL TILT’	28
‘“HOLD TIGHT, GENTLEMEN!”’ &c.	36
‘A DAY WITH JOHN PEEL’	50
‘I AGAIN GOT UP TO THE PANTHER’	56
‘“TOO FAST, ADA!” I CRIED’	74
‘ONE WAY OF STARTING THEM’	78
‘ALL OVER THE ROAD WITH SEVERAL NARROW ESCAPES’	86
‘DOWN GOES MY NEAR-SIDE LEADER’	90
‘JACK BLACKMARSH FIRED THE TWO SHOTS’	106
‘RANGER FALLS BACK WITH A PIERCING YELL’	112
‘THE MARE DECLINES TO MAKE A WAITING RACE OF IT’	122
‘REMINISCENCES OF A RIFLE’	132
‘JACK IS OVER AND TURNS IN HIS SADDLE’	146
‘THE DEFEAT OF CAPTAIN COOK’	162
‘WITH AN UNEARTHLY SCREAM HE MADE A DASH AT ME’	166
‘HAVING THEIR PICTURE TOOK,’ &c.	174
‘THE DARK PONY IN BLINKERS,’ &c.	178
‘“IS THAT SO?” SAID TOM; “THEN HERE GOES!”’	186
‘AND FIRE MY LEFT BARREL	194

	PAGE
'FREDDY SOON HAD THE GAFF INTO HIM' <i>to face</i>	206
'ON THE HILL AT EPSOM'	218
"'I VOW I'LL GO TO THE MEET MYSELF,'" &c. . . .	226
'A WILD CHEER GREETES THE PLUCKY PERFORM- ANCE'	230
'THE KNOWSLEY COCK LITERALLY CUT THE OTHER TO PIECES'	240
'CATCHING THE DOCTOR'S HORSE'	248
'THE SMARTEST WHIPPER-IN IN ENGLAND'	258
'I AM VAGUELY CONSCIOUS OF SOMETHING WHIZ- ZING THROUGH THE AIR'	268
"'YES IT IS; I SEE ITS BEAK!'"	282
'POUNDED!'	286

"Here comes
the Lamb!"



FORES'S

SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

STEEPLECHASING IN IRELAND.

By 'LARKY GRIGG.'

THE HORSES.

IN a previous article I dealt with the principal courses used in Ireland from time to time, as the progress of events in the steeplechase world sped onward. In the present paper I purpose dealing with the horses, but the review must be a brief one. I will take the early 'cracks' first, a position to which they are entitled, as they performed over real steeplechase courses—not artificial ones; and no matter what others may say to the contrary, I adhere to the theory that they were better weight-carriers, better jumpers, and could go as fast as the horses of the present day. Up to the beginning of the 'thirties' steeplechasing was only in its primitive state, and no great luminary came on the scene until then. Valentine, a Cork-bred horse—a neat, natty, little bay about 15.1—by Irishman, was about the first champion between the flags. He had a protracted and distinguished career, and though he was a small horse, and not very stout, yet he was perfectly at 'home' in any country. Mr. Barry raced him for several years, and he won no end of races. When he sold him to Mr. John Power, of Gurteen, he was about 15 years old, and had he been judiciously ridden in the Grand National of '41 it would have been Valentine's, not Charity's year. Mr. Power rode him, and he had an absurd bet on the event, that he would not be headed over the first half-dozen fences. He won his bet—which was a 'monkey'—but lost the race thereby. However, he came back across the 'herring-pond' and won the Munster Grand National at Mallow, a few days after the Liverpool. Valentine won the Munster Debenture at Fermoy twice. That was a sum of money invested in Government Stock, to which

the Stewards used to add a 'century.' The stock, with the accruing interest, was to become the property of any one winning it three times. Valentine did the trick twice, and was beaten on two other occasions by Alhambra and Sailor, two great horses of their time. Sailor won a steeplechase without any head-gear, and was a great performer in the 'thirties;' and so too was Alhambra, who belonged to 'Jack' Dennis, and who many a time and oft bore himself and his colours to the front in some of the leading events in Ireland at the time.

Regulator was a slashing grey horse of commanding appearance, and looked like carrying seventeen stone to hounds. He was the property of a company of Dublin sportsmen, and was the hero of the first Kilrue Cup, ran for in March 1842. All the cracks of the period were behind him, and all the good men were up: Lord Howth, Lord Waterford, Captain Bell, Sir James Baird, G. H. Moore, J. J. Preston, and several others. Regulator jumped the terrible course at Gammonsfield in safety, though he did not win there; and he also negotiated the Rooska course at Cahir, in the back end of '42, when he ran second to Anonymous for the first New Melton Stakes, which was productive of one of the finest finishes on record. Regulator won the Munster Grand National at Mallow, in March '43, from a big field, and squandered them again next day. He took a prominent part in the great race for the Kilrue Cup of '43, but at Dunboyne, a few months afterwards, he fell over a small narrow bank and broke his neck. Mr. Colgan rode him in nearly all his races, and many good judges averred he would have been 'cock of the walk' but for his untimely end.

Brunette was a dark-brown mare by Sir Hercules. She was about 15.3, and a beautiful animal to look at, and as good as she was good-looking. No gamer animal ever looked through a bridle. She won the Kilrue Cup—then the principal cross-country event of the year in Ireland—on four successive occasions, her imposts ranging from 11 st. 10 lbs. to 12 st. 7 lbs. Brunette won no end of cups and trophies besides; in fact, she cleared the board during her seven years' career on the turf. She won the Westmeath Urn three years in succession, the Meath Gold Cup ditto, the Foxhunters' Goblet at Lismacrarty ditto, and many other cups, goblets, and prizes, as well. In the early part of '47 a couple of big chases in England fell a prey to her, but she could only get fourth to Matthew in the Grand National; but then she was dead amiss on the day which, after all, was a great one for

‘Ould Ireland,’ as the only four horses that crossed the ‘silver streak’ occupied the van, the placings being Matthew, 1; St. Leger, 2; Miss Tisdall, 3; Brunette, 4. The twenty-four English horses were ‘nowhere.’

Matthew was a consistent performer, never quite first-class, and at his best on the Grand National day. Brunette beat him often, and so too did St. Leger, between which trio some of the finest contests ever witnessed in Ireland took place. They occupied the leading positions in the Kilrue Cup of ’45, a length only dividing them at the finish. There were thirty-seven natural fences in the four miles, and not one of the three made the slightest mistake in the whole journey; and St. Leger was only a four-year-old at the time, which made his performance the more meritorious.

Fanny Ellsler by Feramorz—there were two animals of that name—was a low, thick, chestnut mare, and one of the finest jumpers that ever crossed a fence. A few of her contemporaries had the foot of her in the run home—Brunette, Regulator, and Sam Slick to wit; but given a cramped or intricate country, she would give the best of them quite enough of it. Fanny’s greatest triumph was in the Munster Grand National of ’44, which was one of the most terrific races ever seen over such a big country. The Fawn—that never made a mistake before—was killed, Fra Diavolo (with his owner, ‘Jack’ Dennis, in the saddle) was second, and the great leathering Blueskin third: the latter was one of the finest horses ever stripped for a steeplechase. One would search twenty weigh-yards now-a-days in vain for such an animal; he looked like carrying twenty stone to hounds, and was full of quality. He won many good races under the ‘Curraghmore blue,’ including the New Melton Stakes at Cahir twice, viz. ’43 and ’44; also two steeplechases and a hurdle-race the same afternoon at Eglinton Park under heavy imposts, Lord Waterford holding the ribbons on each occasion.

Sir John was probably the best horse that ever carried the ‘Curraghmore blue’ between the flags. He was a low, lengthy, bay gelding by Windfall, and was as game as a pebble. He split Farnham and Abd-el-Kader for the Kilrue Cup of ’49, and won besides many other races—the Rock Stakes at Cashel two years in succession, viz. in ’49 and ’50. In November ’49 won the Grand Autumn Handicap at Liverpool, beating sixteen others, Johnny Ryan being on Sir John, who was followed home by W. Archer

on Vain Hope, and Lord Strathmore on the Doctor, while 'Jem' Mason, on Proceed, was not far off. Sir John was third to Abd-el-Kader and Knight of Gwynne—two fellow-countrymen—for the Grand National of '50, and occupied the same position, carrying top-weight, the following year, when Mr. Osborne's game son of Ishmael was heralded the first dual winner of the Liverpool.

Abd-el-Kader was a low, lengthy horse by Ishmael, not quite 15.2, and shares with the Lamb the honour of being one of the best 'little'uns' ever girthed. He won several races in the Emerald Isle before crossing the Channel, and with Chris Green on his back won the Grand National of '50, beating the largest field that ever started for a steeplechase, he having thirty-one aspirants for cross-country honours behind him on the occasion. In this great win Abd-el-Kader was hardly backed for a shilling beyond what his astute owner, Mr. Joseph Osborne, had on him; but he threw in for a good stake, and saw his little horse pulling Green out of the saddle, as his many opponents clattered along by the canal, some thirty lengths in his wake: none of whom were able to catch him in the run home, though two fellow-countrymen—Knight of Gwynne and Sir John—were each within a length of him at the finish. With Tom Abbott, the justly celebrated Irish amateur in the pigskin, Abd-el-Kader won the Grand National again in 1851, after one of the finest races ever seen at Aintree, Abbott only getting home by a short head from Maria Day; Sir John, who was top-weight, carrying the 'Curraghmore blue' into third place for the second year in succession.

Abd-el-Kader was a candidate for Grand National honours again in 1852, but he made a poor show. However, but for the merest accident, or omission, rather, on the part of those who attended to his toilet, he would have landed his third Liverpool victory: they forgot to put on a noseband, and Mr. Osborne only discovered his mistake at the starting-post, and was unable to set matters right before the horses were despatched on their journey, when the little Ishmaelite rushed to the head of affairs and made every post a winning one until half a mile from home, when Tom Olliver came up with Peter Simple and won easily.

Betsy Prig was about the best of all Welcome's progeny. She was a thick bay mare, very like her sire in her conformation, and inherited in a great measure his superb staying powers. She won several races all over Ireland in 1850; but her most

memorable contests were those over 'the sticks' at Ballinaha, a splendid course near Clonmel. She won on the first day of the meeting, after four heats and one of the finest races ever seen; a horse called the Otter, with Charlie Canavan up, just beating Betsy on the post by a head the second day. In 1851 Betsy Prig won several races, amongst them being the Rock Stakes at Cashel, and the following year she was returned the winner of the Kilrue Cup, after a desperate race with Gridiron and Lamienne, the latter of whom bested her by a head at Mullingar a few days previously.

Captain Burke had some good horses in 'the fifties' throughout the whole of which decade Old Rake, a bay horse by the Chester Cup winner of 1836—Tamworth—held on his 'pins' and won about thirty steeplechases, some good prizes being amongst them. He was an extraordinary old horse; and so, too, was another bay horse of Captain Burke's—Tom Tinker—who began public life as Waterford Tom, and was killed at Kilmallock in '58, after he had won nearly forty steeplechases in the five preceding years. The Tinker was a great jumper, although an arrant rogue, but Jack Noble and Debeau were able to get him out, and he achieved nearly all his victories in their hands. Captain Burke had a happy knack of keeping his horses fit and well; and another of his animals—Peg-the-Rake—kept on her 'pins' for half-a-dozen years, and won very many races from '51 to '57. She was by Retriever, a low, thick mare, and a most accomplished jumper, and figured between the flags at a time when an animal's jumping powers were not a secondary consideration.

Eugenia was the best cross-country performer that ever Harkaway sired. She was a lengthy, low chestnut mare, and to her belongs the honour of winning the first race in Ireland, to which 300*l.* was given as a bonus. This was at PuncHESTOWN in April '56, and Eugenia beat a large field for it, as she did at Mullingar a few days later on, and was about our best mare in the 'fifties,' if I except New Broom, a fine, slashing bay mare by Damask by Touchstone; but New Broom came on the scene just as Eugenia went off, having begun her lengthy and distinguished career in 1858, when she gave a foretaste of her form by winning the Munster Grand National at Charleville in April of that year, after a terrible struggle. The following year she won half-a-dozen good races, worth about a 'century' each, having Noble as her pilot on each occasion; and in 1860 her greatest hit was in

the Rock Stakes at Cashel, which she won from a big but select field, though she fell at the first hurdle. Thomastown and all the Irish 'cracks' were behind her on the occasion. Mr. 'Thomas' had a winning mount on her for the Munster Steeplechase at Limerick a few days after her Cashel win. She was owned by a solicitor in Cork, who took her across the 'herring-pond' on several occasions, and never came back empty-handed.

Thomastown was another of the 'cut-and-come-again' sort, and was a splendid animal to look at. He was a brown horse, by the Dean (son of Voltaire), and was a powerfully made animal—one of the sort that could race under twelve or thirteen stone for four miles. One of the best judges of hounds and horses we ever had in Ireland, the late Burton Persse, kept him as a sire for very many years at Moyode, though he detested a stallion. Nor was he mistaken either, as he got a great class of cross-country horses both under silk and scarlet. Thomastown had a protracted and, I might say, unfortunate career—for that he was most unfortunate in not having placed at least two Grand Nationals to his owner's credit no one who saw him perform at Liverpool will attempt to deny. He was trained at the Curragh by James Murphy, who frequently told the writer he never had a horse good enough to try the brown at four miles, set the weights as he might. Thomastown began with only a middling record in 1858, but the following year he won the last Kilrue Cup—as that old-established and most popular of Irish cross-country events was allowed to die out after that year—and several other races, notably the principal steeplechase at Kingstown, for which it was a very tight fit between the big brown, Wee Nell, and Dodger, necks only separating the three at the finish of a protracted struggle.

In 1860 Thomastown won the Great Metropolitan Steeplechase at Baldoyle, and the Kildare Hunt Plate at the Punchestown Meeting of that year, worth 'three centuries,' and which at that time was the principal item on the card. His success in England, where he was kept for seven years afterwards, was very equivocal. He took part in four or five Grand Nationals, and would have assuredly won one but for being interfered with by a loose horse at a critical part of the race.

Wee Nell, as her name implies, belonged to the 'little school,' as this diminutive daughter of Cossack, the Derby winner of 1847, was little (if anything) over 15 hands, but gamest of the game. She began a lengthened and brilliant career between the

flags in 1859, being then only four years old, and her race with Thomastown for the Railway Stakes at Kingstown told her sporting owner, Tom Harper, that he had a trump card in the little bay, as, in a big field, she ran him to a neck, and amongst her other victories that year under the 'tartan' jacket of Tom Harper won the Ulster Grand National at Armagh. In the following year the little bay also won a few good races, her most notable win being in the Westmeath Handicap at Mullingar, in which she beat a dozen of the smartest horses of the year. She was then taken across the Channel and won some races in England in 1861, the Leamington Grand Annual amongst others, and was a regular and consistent performer between the flags there for years afterwards.

This was also the case with Anatis, a nice bay mare by King Dan, that won the Kilrue Cup in '55 as the property of John Cassidy of Dublin, and the Grand National at Liverpool five years afterwards. She was not by any means a taking-looking animal, being light and shelly; and though she was returned a Liverpool winner, she was never quite first class. Of far better class was Shangarry, a Tipperary-bred animal by Confessor, and bought by Mr. E. Studd from his breeder, Mr. Going, at a very stiff price. He was a slashing-looking four-year-old, and his dam had bred a lot of clinkers. Shangarry's first performance in public was for the Grand National Hunt Race at Crewkerne, in April '66, he being then five years old, which he won in a common canter,—Mr. Alex. Goodman having the mount, as he had also on his stable-companion, Salamander, in that year's Grand National, which he could have won by the length of a street. Shangarry was kept especially in reserve for the Grand National of '67; but in the hands of Mr. Thomas he could only get third to Cortolvin and Fan, so that the well-kept pot boiled over this time.

Cortolvin was another expatriated Irishman like himself, being bred and sold by a Queen's County gentleman to the Duke of Hamilton, in whose colours he won the Liverpool of that year (1867). Cortolvin was a most consistent public performer: a fine, slashing-looking brown horse, of doubtful parentage, but never really a first-rate chaser. Not so, however, his predecessor in Grand National honours, Salamander, one of the best horses that ever carried a silk jacket, and whose history from his very foalhood was a most remarkable one. He was bred by Mr. John Boutchier, of Baggotstown near Bruff, co.

Limerick, and was foaled with a crooked leg. He grew up a fine slashing colt, and when three years old, Mr. Boutchier sent him to several local fairs, but no one would touch him. At last, Mr. Hartigan, a well-known Limerick hunter-dealer, took him off Mr. Boutchier's hands for 35*l.*; and some time afterwards Mr. E. Studd bought him, with two hunters, from Mr. Hartigan. When Mr. Studd put the big bay into training he soon became aware that he had got hold of a 'clinker,' and though he appeared in public on a few occasions before his Grand National victory, very few indeed suspected how good he was: and Studd's commissioners were enabled to get on the money to win 31,000*l.* at from 40 to 50 to 1—the former being his starting price.

An Irishman, Johnny Igoe, rode him in his previous essays, and was dressing to ride him in the National, when Mr. Studds' mandate went forth that Mr. Alex. Goodman, not Igoe, was to ride him. The scene that followed beggars description. Suffice it to say that he came away at the finish and won in a canter. Instead of 10 st. 9 lbs., which was his impost, he could have carried *L'Africaine's* weight, 13 st. 2 lbs., and won.

Cortolvin was second to him, and another Irishman—*Light-heart*—was fourth. Salamander won the Grand Annual at Warwick a few days afterwards, for which event *Lighthouse* was third; but it was a case of Salamander first and the rest 'nowhere,' as Mr. Goodman went away with the big bay from the post and won by twenty lengths, which could have been made a 'hundred' had he so chosen. With 12 st. 7 lb. on his back at Crewkerne, in April '66, he was winning the principal handicap easily, but fell, and received such injuries that he had to be destroyed.

Despatch was another Limerick-bred horse, by Dough. He was a brown gelding, about 15.3, and a really brilliant performer; and yet he was one of those animals that would break a bank to follow, as he was always there or thereabouts, but seldom or ever where he ought to be—in front. Despatch was very handy to the winner in the Grand National of '69, was second to his fellow-county horse, the Lamb, in '71, started first favourite, and was third for the same event in '72, while he got 'a shop' in several other important cross-country contests; and his history in that respect has no parallel except in the case of Hall Court, who, like Despatch, was a good, but unfortunate, animal.

The Lamb was also a Limerick-bred horse, being by Zouave, dam by Arthur. A farmer named Henchy, near Ballyneety, bred him, and into his third year he was a mean-looking little fellow; and a gentleman in the neighbourhood had the refusal of him at 'a pony.' However, he won a couple of small races in his own locality, and then they began to find out how good the little horse was. A curious thing about him was, that he barely stood 14.3 when he won a flat race at Limerick in September '65, but grew on, and was fully 15.2 when he won his first Grand National. He was one of the finest jumpers that ever looked through a bridle; and a gentleman, who went down especially to Beecher's Brook to see him jump it, assured me he thought the Lamb and Mr. 'Thomas' would never land. He was in front of the twenty-four at the time, and Despatch was at his quarters.

The Lamb's greatest performance was in the Grand National of '72, wherein he carried the steadier of 12st. 7lb. into fourth place. He was 'in it' as he jumped the last hurdle, but the weight told its tale in the run home, and the turned-loose Casse Tête won. With 13st. on his back he won a handicap at the South Hampshire Meeting on April 19th of that year, but was killed at Baden-Baden in the month of September following.

Liberator was a Kerry bred horse, being by Daniel O'Connell, and he has been thirteen years carrying silk, having begun on the flat in 1872, and is still hale and hearty. No doubt he was one of the best horses of the century between the flags, and his name has been inseparably connected with the Grand National. He began his steeplechase career at Cork Park in '75; but poor Bill Ryan could not get him out for the Grand Stand Plate, but in the hands of his trainer, 'Madcap' Lynch, he won the Park Plate next day, and several other events that year. He essayed Grand National honours in '76, but when running well with Tom Ryan fell. With Mr. 'Thomas' on his back he was third to Austerlitz the following year, and did not run at all in '78. In a field of 18 he won easily in '79, most of those behind him being Irish-bred horses, and with 12st. 7 lb., and Mr. Garrett Moore again in the saddle, he would have repeated the performance the following year, but for the fact of a stable-companion—the big, leathering Jupiter Tonans—making the pace a cracker for the last mile, and the game son of Daniel O'Connell was

only able to get second to Empress, the Eyrefield Lodge mare, to whom he was presenting two stone.

In the succeeding National—'81—when going as well as anything could go, he fell, and another Irish horse, Woodbrook, won. He essayed to carry 12 st. 7 lbs. to victory again over that heart-breaking four miles and a half in '82, but again fell, and the issue was once more fought out by two Irish horses, and whilom stable-companions, Seaman and Cyrus, a head only dividing them at the finish.

We have had several other clinkers within the past few years, notably the grossly mismanaged Clonave—one of the finest horses of modern times—Empress, Woodbrook, Too Good, Chancery, and Whisper Low—the latter, the best four-year-old in the world on May 28, 1882, when she won the Grand Steeple-chase de Paris under Tom Beasley. Mohican, who was third on that occasion, was one of our best horses in later days, but a most unfortunate customer. In this notice of prominent chasers I must not omit Frigate, who, like Whisper Low, was of the low lengthy type now-a-days so rare.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACROSS COUNTRY.

By 'A CAMBRIDGE BLUE.'

IT was the day of the Inter-University Cross-Country Match, and Gerald Gilchrist of St. John's College, Cambridge, was one of the five selected to represent 'the Alma Mater' against the sister University. By dint of hard training during the October term Gerry had easily come in among the five placed in the trial run. In the previous week, in fact, he had had it all his own way as second string, and had romped in behind the great Mortimer Jones in the fast time of forty-four minutes—at least, so the stop-watches said. The course was an eight-mile one, right over the Gog-ma-gog range of hills, and in a circular sweep back again into Cambridge, with any amount of rough experiences in the shape of plough-land and stiff fences. Gerry had run his trial with the sensation of feeling very fit throughout; but, unfortunately, he was a boy (in other words, 'a Varsity man') who could never do things in moderation. So that after running four races between the

aforesaid trial and the great event (winning one of them, the 'Maudlin' Two-mile Strangers' Handicap), it was small wonder that, on the evening before, he was suddenly seized with the conviction he had overshot the mark, and had trained too fine. In this dilemma he applied for advice to about the oldest of old women friends he had, who, in mistaken kindness, dosed him with a restorative which braced his unstrung nerves to such a pitch that he never got a wink of sleep all night.

And now the day dawned—just as great days always will dawn—dark, wild, and wet, finding Gerry 'all of a pucker.' He had had a deplorable night's rest, and no wonder he indulged a disinclination to get up. At every gust of wind, as it lashed the rain against his window-pane, he had anathematised the inevitable state of those abominable ploughs that awaited him. He had, during the night, hopped out of bed like a rocket, with cramp, and in his agony forgotten the existence of his tub, which was ready to catch him. So when Morris, his chum and confidential adviser, burst into his room at twelve o'clock on the eventful morning, cheery and fresh, having breakfasted hours ago and kept a couple of lectures, he found poor Gerry sound asleep.

'Hullo! by Jove, I'll take my Sam you *are* a lazy young hound! Here's your fire gone out, and your breakfast cooked to a cinder on the hearth!'

'Dash my wig!' chirped Gerry, springing up like a schoolboy caught napping. 'What sort of a morning is it?'

'Afternoon you mean, you precious maniac!' said Morris reproachfully, as he drew up the blind. 'How about training orders? I thought you hare-and-hounders had to be out of bed at daybreak, and sitting in cold tubs?'

'Well,' said Gerry, stripping like the impulsive lad he was, 'you clear out while I have mine, and run down to the butteries, there's a good fellow, and order me some more breakfast.'

So eager did he seem to make up for lost time, that more than once his trainer reminded him, in horsey parlance, not to 'snatch his corn.' By the time he was well into his second chop and had polished off a couple of poached eggs, quite a merry meeting was being held in his rooms; and not a few were rowdying about, as only University boys can do, after morning lectures are over. The badge of honour—Gerry's thin white running zephyr, trimmed with C. U. Hare-and-Hound colours, straw, salmon, and chocolate, and bearing the coveted band of 'light blue' round the left arm—came in for its share of criti-

cism and rough handling as it flew from one hand to another, until a well-directed shot at last landed the precious blue in Portcher's face, and knocked his spectacles off.

Portcher, by-the-by, was senior classic, and was at this moment buried in a book and an arm-chair, the only studious one of the party. With a sigh he laid his book down, rubbed his eyes, polished his spectacles, and tried to look cheerful.

'What time do you start this run of yours?' he drawled. 'I shouldn't mind coming to see you myself, only I've promised to do the Maddingley "grind" with Professor Stokes, you know.'

'Oh, send him as hare,' suggested one, Jolly Perkins; 'he'd make capital scent. By-the-by, Gerry, I've done you the honour of risking a trifle on you, as Mortimer Jones is backing himself for second place to-day. So mind you pull me through, as I'm deuced hard up.'

'You do me honour, indeed,' replied Gerry; 'dashed if I don't upset your calculations before the day's out!'

'Well, don't "chuck up the sponge" whatever you do,' replied Perkins, mistaking Gerry's meaning; 'for, after all, those Oxford fellows claim your chief consideration.'

As the party broke up to go and play 'shell-out' at Gubbin's billiard-room, there was a general inclination to ply Gerry with parting instructions; 'and for goodness' sake' (Jolly Perkins came back to say) 'don't let's have any more of this horrible training, for I don't relish having to put my pipe out every time I do you the honour of a visit.'

Four o'clock came at last, and for the first time in his life Gerald Gilchrist dons his 'blue.' Morris had been priming him with egg-and-sherry, and in altogether better spirits he wended his way to the 'Hoop Hotel,' bagged up in sweaters and cape-ulster. The big two-horse 'bus was waiting to take the two teams to the place of rendezvous, a small inn on the outskirts of the town. The Oxford men had first arrived, and were larking about in the upper regions of the hotel, invading one another's apartments in search of stray articles of running attire, and frightening the chambermaids out of their senses. They were not long in loading up the 'bus, and, with a great display of animal spirits, the two teams,—ten in all—their umpires and starter, clattered up the town and pulled up at the 'Earl of Derby' Inn. There they were welcomed by a crowd of admirers and athletes. The hares—an Oxford man escorted by two of Cambridge, all well laden with big bags of printers' paper—had

already been dismissed to lay the scent afresh ; and then followed a wretched ten minutes for the athletes, who paced about the upper apartment chafing and fretting as they waited the order to strip. Those who have experienced it can testify to the sickening nature of this period of suspense.

It has ended at last with the call of 'Time!' Each for himself now : readjust your shoe-straps, put a final polish on your legs, grasp your corks in grim determination, keep your peckers up, my lads, and turn out !

Gerry's experience of what followed will perhaps serve as the best description of what turned out to be a remarkable run :—

'The starter kept us,' he said, 'hanging about at the post for what seemed a cruelly long time ; the men were hugging their arms, chafing and shivering in the late autumnal breeze like a pack of silly women ; and there was as much fuss in making us toe our mark as if it had been for a short sprinting-race. At last came the pause, "Are you ready?" followed by one or two breaking away in their hurry to get off. But at the crack of the pistol we jumped away in fine style, and ran at almost 100-yard pace for a quarter of a-mile down the Cherry Hinton Road, Armstrong, the crack Oxford man, making the running. I was crowded out of the first scrimmage, and so was Mortimer Jones ; and we found ourselves together at the gap, as we charged into some unfortunate man's cabbages, and then took to the fields. "Let him go ! he won't keep it up long at this pace," Jones puffed out, savagely. "He hasn't come to the Gogs yet," I answered, maliciously ; and then we forged up to the front, some ploughman waving us over the newly-turned plough. We were still tramping, in a steady cluster, as we took to the muddy bridle-lane, and followed the telegraph-wires for nearly a quarter of a mile, slipping back at every step. But the pace was beginning to tell, and here we first formed a long procession. A sharp turn to the right, and we were in the long stubble-field that climbs the Gogs, and facing that most formidable hill, the bugbear of the whole run. And it was a case of digging our toes in up there, I can tell you ! At the top you saw men linger, through sheer weariness, as they climbed the gate, as if craving for a moment's rest. From the summit was seen a panorama looking over Cambridge, which seemed quite in the distance below, and blue in the evening haze ; and there was the sun descending, like a ball of fire, over John's Chapel. But one

has little time to dwell upon the beauties of nature in an Inter-University race! Armstrong was still making the running, but Mortimer Jones and myself were close on his heels, only nursing ourselves after that awful grind up the Gogs before we meant to make an effort to dispense with his company. There was a gap between us and the next man, but I saw it was a light blue; and then came three Oxford men in a bunch, and the last couple had not surmounted their troubles at the hill. In grim silence, hating one another like poison, we ran past the Reservoir, through the clover, and over the sheep-trays, which the Oxford man cleared in his stride; and then we swerved sharply round to the right, and swung down the fallows with a long bone-shaking stride, till we got to the sandy, rain-furrowed road, at the point where it overlooked the last steep mound of the Gogs, and then under a tall shadowy hedgerow for some quarter of a mile.

‘Half-way house was now in sight, and the Oxford man was still answering untiringly to our repeated challenges; and still we had to submit to be in his wake. Here there were several horsemen waiting, who cantered with us, and cheered and tallyhoed us as we crashed through the turnips and crossed the Colchester Road. Cambridge was now to our extreme right, and we appeared to be leaving it: but the Cambridge fellows, to whom every yard of the run was so familiar, knew that at the plantation above we should turn and set our faces in the direction of home. There was still another three miles odd to traverse, and we were beginning to internally examine ourselves and see how our chances stood for the finish. The spirit, indeed, was willing enough — faster legs was all that was wanted, backed by perfect bellows.

‘In the rear it seemed obvious there were “bellows to mend.” One was running as if in his sleep, his head down and his hands drooped; another was digging his thumbs into his ribs, evidently trying to conquer stitch: and all were straggling.

‘Down a springy wheat-field and across another plough we skirted a small stackyard, and crossed the Stapleford Road. Up a particularly gluey turnip-field, trodden in by sheep, past a disused chalk-quarry, down some good stubble-land, and over the road to Great Shelford, there we were still running, game and strong; and Armstrong was still ahead! It was getting dusk as we neared the last plantation, and bore sharply round and finally faced Cambridge. There was the black barn, the

herald of "the run in," and only three valley-fields between it and us!

"Race for the gap! come along!" Jones hissed.

'And we raced up to the Oxford man, and gave him such a dusting, that, for the moment, he gave way, and we were ahead. I could hear him coming on behind, though, breathing heavily over my shoulder; and I knew he was only nursing his strength for another big spurt at the finish. It was rather a case now of "honour among thieves," for I wondered if Mortimer Jones would think I was "turning on him" if I tried to give him the go-by, for I felt, somehow, I had it in me to do so. However, I let him negotiate the gap first, and was down in the ditch as he scrambled out of it. It was an awfully "hairly" place to get through quickly, when you had been racing hard for six miles. you had to slip down into a broad, thorny ditch, and then scramble on hands and knees up the opposite bank, and squeeze through a brambly gap. Twice I slipped and fell back, my knees seeming to refuse to do their work. The Oxford man was frantic, for I was keeping him back. He saw *now* why we had raced for the gap. It wasn't my fault, and I sung out what was meant for an apology, and even let him through first, for he had jumped right on to the top of me when he saw me floundering in the ditch. And so he was ahead of me slightly all up the next field. As for Mortimer Jones, dash him! he was leading the lot, and at that moment I despaired of ever reaching him. "Hullo! *he's down!*" I could almost imagine I heard the echo of the words passing like an electric shock through the crowd waiting for us in the road, as at that instant *down* went Mortimer Jones, a regular nasty one, in attempting to make a sensational jump over the last fence of all into the final field—a terrible crop of healthy growing swedes. I saw it had lamed him directly he got up, and in an instant it flashed across me that my time had come! Poor Mortimer Jones! I shall never forget his face as we passed him, and he tried to come on again. "Curse it! my ankle's gone!" I heard him mutter, and from my heart I pitied him. But there was the Oxford man's account to settle yet! There was an excited crowd in the road to wave us on, and when they saw what was happening there *was* a row! My hair began to bristle and I couldn't help thinking of what the *Sportsman* had said that morning:—

"It is quite on the cards that there may be a good finish to-day in

the Oxford and Cambridge Eight-mile Cross-country Match, both teams being in slip-slap trim and having a tower of strength in So-and-so," &c.

'The eyes of the sporting world I felt were on me. I *must* distinguish myself; I must beat the Oxonian in the struggle home!

"Come along, you men! Well run, Sirs! well run indeed! *Now* come along, Gerry! Cambridge! Oxford! *Now* for your effort! Oxford wins! Bravo, Gerry! that's it! Cambridge! Oxford! Cambridge!" It was awful! Neck-and-neck we took the road, a quarter of a mile or so straight run from home, and each declining to give in. The sound of galloping hoofs was in our wake and tramping heels around us. Cavendish College looms suddenly upon us; we are past it; knees giving, eyes swimming, stride for stride! Four more lamp-posts! (I noticed they were alight.) I can see the crowd at the end, and the tape being stretched across to receive us, and there is a tremendous commotion. I *must* beat this Oxford man! I fling my head back, and clench my teeth and fists, and strain every nerve, and seem to be fighting with the rushing air with knees and arms, whilst everything grows dark and swimming, and all my veins are ready to burst! I hear the Oxford man utter a groan, and he *gives*, just two lamp-posts from home! He's beat! my ghost, he's beat!' A thrill passes through me of savage delight as I throw a glance back to see him in the act of falling headlong. A bound, and I breast the tape! I have won! 'Who-whoop! Cambridge has it!'

'A crowd is around me pouring out their excited congratulations as I lean on the stone-coping of the railway-bridge, my head buried in my arms, sobbing out my very heart. There is a sudden rush to somebody on the ground. There are cries of "Stand back! give him air!" It is Armstrong, the Oxford man, and I reckon I have killed him!'

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The scene is again in Gerry's room, and it is the morning after the run. He has got a breakfast on.

'Seen the *Sportsman* this morning, Gerry?' says Mortimer Jones, hopping in on two sticks. 'Here's something about you "finishing rather fresh." They'd evidently a special reporter at "The Hoop" dinner last night to chronicle your little goings on! No wonder you look so chippy this morning!'

'It was a *libertas non mane timenda*, old chap, at any rate,' said the boy languidly; which being interpreted is, 'I've got a rare bite on for all that!'



Who-hoop! Cambridge has it!!

‘How’s the foot? Come and rest it on this chair. And I wonder how that poor Oxford Armstrong is! We dusted him down between us, I think?’

‘Oh, he’s all fit and proper this morning,’ replied Mortimer Jones. ‘I saw him this morning outside “The Hoop,” on the look-out for Jolly Perkins, who had borrowed a sov. of him last night.’

‘Ha, ha! poor Perkins and his “stitch in time!”’ laughed Gerry.

‘What was that about?’ inquired the other; ‘he grew so precious indistinct towards the end of the evening I couldn’t hear half his speech.’

‘Well,’ replied Gerry, ‘he was congratulating us “jolly dogs at Cambridge” on beating some of the “best stamina from the Oxford kennels,” as he put it; and he went on to say that “in the only cross-country race he’d ever run in he had kept *his* stitch *all* the time, and found he hadn’t saved *anything* by it; and that as he didn’t want to be set down as one of the “fast” lot through the course of life, he’d take jolly good care he’d never run in another.” Whereupon he landed on his back on the floor!’

‘Good again for Jolly Perkins!’ laughed Jones. ‘Well, it wasn’t a bad evening, and that was a capital song you gave us, Gerry!’

From this conversation we may conclude that there was a considerable amount of life in the young hounds yet, notwithstanding their killing run. The evening had ended with a rollicking dinner at ‘The Hoop’ Hotel, at which the Oxford men had been present, and loyally toasted the victorious Cantabs. Of course, Gerry was the hero of the evening. Both he and Mortimer Jones (who is less patronising now!) have had to promise their people at home not to ‘attempt suicide’ again in an Inter-University Cross-country Match. But there is something in the background, or they wouldn’t have registered their vows so readily. I fear they are in pursuit of higher game, for I heard the President of the University Athletic Club strongly advising them, with a view to preserve both ‘style’ and ‘stride,’ to go in for the ‘cinder-path.’ You see, there are the Inter-University Sports coming off at Lillie Bridge (the ‘people at home’ never thought of specifying this in the compact, and the three-mile race is every bit as ‘suicidal!’), and long-distance men will be in demand. Don’t say too much about it, or you may spoil sport; but do as I tell you, and lay your money on Cambridge for first and second place in ‘the three-miles.’

THE RIVER FOR EVER!

AN ANGLER'S SPRING SONG.

By CAPT. ALEXANDER CLARK KENNEDY, F.R.G.S., &c.

(*Late Coldstream Guards.*)



HE waters! the waters! how clearly they flow!
 How softly and sweetly the summer winds blow!
 Then away to the banks of the river so free,
 Where the salmon delights on his way from the sea.
 Oh! the river for ever! the river for me!

Come, give me my 'greenheart,' so trusty and tried,
 Ah! countless the fish thou hast slain in thy pride!
 What feats thou hast done in the Dee and the Spey,
 In Erin, in Norway, the Don, and the Tay!
 How proud is thy past! Thou shalt conquer to-day!

Oh! ours is the country of sportsmen galore;
 We've bred many game ones, and may we get more!
 Though glorious pastures lie over the sea,
 We'll stick to Old England, the home of the free,
 And the rivers of Britain for ever for me!

There are joys on the turf where the racehorses love
 To gallop their best and their metal to prove.
 How pleasant the scene as they fly o'er the lea!
 How cheery for winners their 'numbers' to see!
 But dearer by far are the rivers to me!

Though many a maiden may find a delight
 In flirting by day and in dancing by night;
 Though the belle of the ball may be lovely to see,
 And flirting amusing I fully agree,
 To court the gay salmon is dearer to me!

You may listen with joy to the notes of the horn,
 As the shouts of the hunters awaken the morn;
 And delighted you ride to the covert to see
 The muster of sportsmen of every degree,
 But fairer than all are the waters to me!

Mark the gallant old Squire as he sits on his hack,—
 His cheeks are as red as the coat on his back!
 'Tally-ho!'—Now he holds up his hat in the air.
 'Tis a pleasure to glance at his face, I declare;
 But give me the river! I'd sooner be there!

Go, take up your gun,—to the woods, to the moor!
 You can yacht on the ocean, or 'golf' on the shore;
 You can roam o'er the globe, foreign countries to see;
 You may hunt, you may race like a bird o'er the lea,
 So long as you leave the proud salmon to me!

You may go to the Solent, at Cowes, or at Ryde,
 To gaze on the yachts as they pass on the tide.
 How proud the young skippers aboard them must be!
 How gallant they look as they glide o'er the sea!
 But fairer by far is the river to me!

If your liver is wrong, shall I tell you a cure?
 For a fit of the 'blues' I've a remedy sure:
 Just take up your rod—to the river away!
 You rose him! you *have* him! a 'springer,' hurray!
 Now I'll wager you *haven't* a liver to-day!

What mem'ries of Galway! those fish in the Bann!
 In the Bush, in the Boyne, how they 'rose' and they 'ran!'
 What lunches we ate as we lay in the fern!
 What monsters we hooked 'neath the bridge on the Erne!
 And may they be waiting whene'er we return!

All hail to old Shannon! good luck to the Moy!
 Those glorious streams that I fished when a boy.
 In mem'ry once more I am happy and free
 By Thurso and Tweed on their way to the sea;
 Oh! Memory's a jolly companion to me!

Ah! cheery old comrade, I see you again,
 And bright is your smile through the wind and the rain!
 For the salmon has felt the first taste of the steel.
 What glorious music! hark, hark! to your reel!
 And there's death in your eye—be he 'springer'* or 'peal.'

More power to your elbow! more health to your cheek!
 More work for your rod, and more use for your 'cleek!'
 May the season beginning prove, ere it is past,
 Far better for slaughter than even your last!
 Now away, gallant friend, to your favourite cast!

And may your first fish be a gem of a prize,
 As fresh as a shilling—a monster in size!
 And when, in November, the season is done,
 New pleasures are found in the saddle and gun.
 You can dream of it all and the victories won!

* A 'springer' is a fresh, spring-run salmon; and 'grilse' are, in Ireland, termed 'peal,' or 'graule.'

Then, luck to all comrades ! Hurrah for the spring !
 May your reels with their music aye merrily sing !
 May your hands and your eyes be as true as of yore,
 May you triumph again as you conquered before,
 And salmon in plenty lie dead on the shore !

Oh ! the angler may age, but he *never* grows old :
 His heart shall be young and his spirit be bold !
 When the hair on his head is but scanty and grey,
 I'll wager the veteran will gallantly say,
 'The salmon for ever ! the river for aye !'

CAUGHT NAPPING : A RACING SKETCH.

By FINCH MASON.

AFTER little Tom Dapper, the crack jockey of the middleweight division, had, in most artistic fashion, carried off that important event, the Two Thousand Guinea stakes (the first of the great classic races he had as yet succeeded in winning) on the renowned colt, Tom Tiddler, for his owner, that well-known racing nobleman the Marquis of Carabbas ; it was thought by a very large section of the racing public, and a still larger section of the lovers of that rare old English institution, Fairplay, to be excessively hard lines on Tom, that after his fine display of horsemanship in the Guineas he should be deposed from the back of Tom Tiddler in the Derby in order that Sam Landham, *the* jockey *par excellence* of the day, might have the mount.

That Sam was, take him all round, the finest horseman extant, was a fact not to be denied, even by the most captious ; and it was also agreed that it was only natural that the Marquis of Carabbas, in his anxiety to win the much-coveted 'Blue Ribbon of the Turf,' should endeavour to possess himself of the best talent favourable in the way of jockeyship. But for all that, the public to a man voted the proceeding unfair, and the various sporting papers taking their cue accordingly, quite a little war ensued in their various columns for a week or so prior to the Derby. Of course they took sides in the matter : the *Sporting Tattler* and the *Sporting News* backing up the noble owner of Tom Tiddler through thick and thin, whilst the *Game and Fancy Gazette* and the *Sporting Herald*, on the other hand, extolled the virtues of Tom Dapper, and called the Marquis of Carabbas anything but

a gentleman. The result being, that Tom Dapper himself, who was a singularly quiet, unassuming young man for a jockey, and one who usually took things as they came in a philosophical manner, began to think at last that he was a very ill-used individual indeed. Up till now, too, in common with the rest of the turf community, he had revered Sam Landham as the greatest genius the world had ever seen, and had looked up to him with the same sort of awe with which a newly-ordained curate might regard the Archbishop of Canterbury. To wear the second colours and make the running for the great Sam was an honour, not a degradation; to be beaten by him on the post after a slashing finish was an event to be proud of. The controversy in the sporting papers quickly stopped all that.

The little man thus suddenly made a martyr of, began to see things in the same light, and began to talk of his rival in a contemptuous way, quite at variance with the respectful manner of former days.

'Sam Landham!' he would say, with a sneer; 'Who's he, I should like to know? I could hug the rails all the way and come round Tattenham Corner every bit as well as he could if I had the chance. Yes! and win the Derby just as well into the bargain, if I had the luck to be on a good 'un, which I never have had yet. Sam Landham, indeed! *Cuss* Sam Landham, I say!' And the dissatisfied jockey, spitting a straw out of his mouth with an air of deep disgust, made a mental vow that he would send in his cap and jacket to Lord Carabbas without any further loss of time, just to show his lordship that he had some spirit, and, for the future, declined to be sat upon.

But it was ordained that there was to be balm in Gilead; and the wounded spirit of our friend, Tom Dapper, was greatly comforted a short time before the Derby by his having the offer of the mount on Boadicea, the mare that had lately won the One Thousand, and who, for a wonder, had been entered in the Derby. She had started at a forlorn price for the former race—her owner, indeed, and the stable generally, not having fancied her in the least—and ridden by a jockey quite unknown to fame, she had won in the commonest of canters, to the unspeakable astonishment of all concerned. So handsomely indeed did she win, that the owner forthwith determined to have a shy at the Derby as well as the Oaks, and forthwith proceeded to take all the long shots to be had about her in the market.

She was a fine, slashing mare, and bred to stay, and on

paper it certainly looked as if she had a great chance. The home trial previous to the One Thousand, her party all agreed, must have been quite wrong; so when they got her home from Newmarket they tried her over again—this time with a very different result. The mare acquitted herself so well, that another commission was sent into the market to back her for the Derby. For all that, she was never a great public fancy, and there always seemed any amount of money to be had against her: in fact, none but those immediately connected with her knew what a good one the mare really was.

Tom Dapper, who went down to her training-quarters to ride the mare in her gallops, very quickly found out her virtues you may be sure; in fact, as he dismounted after his first ride on her, he told the trainer that he wouldn't swap his mount in the Derby for any one of the favourites—not even Tom Tiddler himself.

'What!' exclaimed he in his excitement, 'Tom Tiddler give Boadicea five pounds! No, don't you believe it, old boy; not if he had fifty Sam Landhams to help him! And the little man went off that same afternoon to Bath, where he was engaged to ride on the following day, feeling convinced in his own mind that, bar accident, he possessed as undeniable a chance of winning the Derby the following Wednesday as ever was, and what was of almost more importance in his eyes, having his revenge on the crack jockey, Sam Landham, at the same time.

And the bet of five thousand to three hundred that was quietly booked to Boadicea by Blue Rock, by a well-known commissioner, directly the ring got together on the top of Lansdown, might, with a very little trouble, have been traced to our friend Tom, who, though a careful soul (he was Scotch on one side and Yorkshire on t'other), was not at all averse to backing his opinion, especially when he thought, as in the present instance, he had got hold of a 'good thing.'

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'Ten to one bar *two*!' 'The favourite don't win for fifty!' 'I'll take odds!' 'I'll lay agin Boerdishia!' 'Bodysee I'll bet against!' (Some of the ring gentry, whose early English history had been neglected, found Boadicea by Bluerock's name rather difficult to pronounce.) Such was the burden of the song that emanated from many brawny throats of the members of the betting ring proper, not to mention those of double their

number (and the latter beat the former hollow in the way of noise) belonging to no ring at all, except in their own imaginations and that of their victims assembled together on Epsom Downs on the Derby day.

From the few quotations we have recorded it will be seen that the favourite—none other than Tom Tiddler—was being backed against the field, that another horse followed close in his footsteps, and that a widish gap separated the pair from the third in favour, who was our old friend, Boadicea.

The second favourite was altogether a dark horse, for he had never as yet been seen on a racecourse. On the strength, however, of a wonderful trial at home, he had been backed by the powerful party behind him to such a tune, that the Mayonaise colt—he was as yet unnamed—quickly passed all the competitors in the betting, with the exception of the redoubtable Tom Tiddler, who, partly because of his win in the Guineas, and partly because he was the mount of Sam Landham (the public would have made a jackass favourite with Sam 'up'), was one of the hottest favourites ever known for the Derby.

The unnamed one was very much liked, too, by the *cognoscenti*, when seen at his work after his arrival at Epsom. Ridden by a well-known north-country jockey, Tom Tallyman, who was to steer him in the actual race, he did such a rattling gallop on the Tuesday previous, and came down the hill in such capital style, that his party were in ecstasies, and raved about him to such an extent as to create quite a scare amongst the Tom Tiddler division; causing, indeed, the more timid of the latter's backers to hedge their money, and a wee bit over, for safety's sake.

The mare Boadicea, on the contrary, the knowing ones declared, would not do. She was trained to perfection, they said, and looked fit to run for her life, but they would have it she wouldn't do for all that. Some declared she tired dreadfully and wouldn't stay the course; others took exception to her action, and vowed the downhill work wouldn't suit her. The odds, consequently, were extended in her case.

The fact was, Boadicea was a bad beginner, as many good ones are, and a lazy one into the bargain: nevertheless, the trainer and the jockey feared nothing. The mare, too, was thoroughly herself, and as cool as a cucumber.

'Find me the colt in England at the present moment that

can give her five pounds,' declared her confident trainer on the morning of the race to her anxious owner, 'and I'll undertake to eat him, saddle and all!'

In the paddock (what would Epsom be without its glorious paddock?) the two favourites, needless to say, held a levée of the most crowded description. Both looked so well, that it was hard to say which people liked best. Backers of the favourite, when they looked the Mayonaise colt over, were so struck with admiration that they trembled for their money. And the same with the backers of the latter when they had had a good stare at Tom Tiddler, who stalked gravely about like the well-bred gentleman he was, as much as to say, 'All right, dear boys; this is Tom Tiddler's own ground: back me and you'll all find yourself picking up gold and silver to any amount before the day is out.' Old gentlemen, too, from the country, who visited Epsom year after year from sheer love of horseflesh, and had no pecuniary interest in the race, gloated over the favourites as they were paraded in front of them, and declared they had not seen such a pair of good-looking ones for years, even if they had ever done so.

'I thought West Australian the best-looking one I ever saw up till now,' would declare one jolly old Squire; 'but, by Jove! this chestnut colt,' pointing to the unnamed one, 'makes me feel strongly inclined to put him on one side—eh?'

'Yes. And I like Tom Tiddler better even than my old favourite, Lord Lyon,' rejoined his friend, another jolly old gentleman of the same school.

Boadicea meanwhile was comparatively neglected as she walked quietly backwards and forwards under the paddock hedge. Barely a dozen people, indeed, took the trouble to look on whilst she was being saddled.

'So much the better,' observed the trainer; 'she'll keep all the cooler. There'll be plenty of 'em though to want to look at her after the race,' added he with a grin. 'What do *you* say, Tom?' And Tom, who had just had a leg up, and was now perched on Boadicea's back with a daisy in his mouth, and altogether wearing a most confident manner, grinned assent.

He and Boadicea then joined the rest of the horses as they walked round and round. Many of the lookers-on were now good enough to express their decided approval of the mare; and well they might, for her dark-brown coat shone like a piece of satin this bright summer's day; and one or two of the long-



headed division, noting the confident look of trainer and jockey, hurried off to get a bit on at the long odds.

'She's a bonny meer, and it's mar opinion it'll tak some on 'em 'all their time, mun, to gi' her five pund,' remarked a genuine tyke up for the week to his companions, as they hurried off to back their opinions.

The next minute, and headed by the great Sam Landham, the horses and their riders emerged from the paddock on to the racecourse, to take part in the usual canter and parade. Ten minutes more, and down went M'George's flag; and a roar of, '*They're off!*' uttered by thousands of voices in unison (how well we know that roar, followed by the clanging of that perfect beast of a bell!), announced the fact that the Start for the Derby was an accomplished fact.

* * * * *

Let the reader imagine himself in a private box in the Grand Stand, enjoying a capital view of the race for the Derby from start to finish.

'What a splendid start! All together! Why, a sheet might cover them! What's that making strong running on the left? Oh, that's Aide-de-Camp forcing the pace for the favourite; he'll have enough of it soon, you'll see. Ah! I told you so! He's coming back to his horses already, and Tom Tiddler's bang in front, now! Yes! but the Mayonaise colt is close up, and full of running, I'll be hanged if he isn't. Boadicea is going well, too: see, her jockey is holding her hard. Now, then, let's see how they get down the hill. By Jove! what nerve that fellow Landham has got! Watch him! What a fearful pace he comes round the corner, and, of course, next the rails as usual: I could swear he almost brushed one with his knee. Here they come! What did I tell you? See, the two favourites are coming bang away from their field, and are racing neck and neck! I'll trouble you to name the winner. But, hallo! what's this? Why, there's something else close up, just behind the favourite! Which one's that? Boadicea, do you say? Where's my card? So it is; and I'm blest if Sam Landham sees him either. He's watching the Mayonaise colt, and thinks he's playing with him. By the powers, he'll get done if he don't mind. Oh, Lord! look there! The mare's coming up on his near side and he doesn't know it, and she wins! *She wins!* The mare wins, I tell you! Not a bit of it! Sam sees her, I tell you. Yes, but he's just too late; he's been caught napping for

once in his life, and he hasn't quite got up I don't think. Impossible to tell, though, for a second. Dash it all, this suspense is awful! There go the numbers up! What is it? 16, 2, 5. Boadicea first (I told you so); Tom Tiddler, second; and the Mayonaise colt, third. Hang that Boadicea! I was told to back her after the One Thousand, but wouldn't—made sure the favourite would beat her. What a good jockey that Tom Dapper is, though! He regularly snatched the race out of the fire, and stole a march on Sam Landham into the bargain. Won't Sam be savage—eh? It's not often you catch him asleep, though, is it?'

The speaker was quite right. It is seldom indeed that the wide-awake Sam Landham is found wanting; but in this case there is no doubt that our friend, Tom Dapper, for once out-jockeyed him. Sticking close behind the favourite all the way, Sam never saw him; and when, after turning Tattenham Corner, the Mayonaise colt—whom he thought he held safe—came up on his whip hand, he thought the race was all over but shouting. Tom Dapper bided his time, and never moved on the mare until past the Bell, when he crept up unseen on the rails in Sam's old place (Sam had moved more in to the centre of the course), and, coming with one run, just managed to win on the post by a head. Sam saw him too late, and made almost superhuman efforts to beat the mare; but it was too late, as we have already seen: he could never *quite* get up.

The defeat of the favourite was a severe blow to Sam's dignity, as may well be imagined; for the great jockey after the race had no alternative—though sorely against his will—but to own that for once in his life he had been 'Caught Napping.'

A NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE.

By GEORGE HERBERT JALLAND.



WELL, this will be my last trip after buffalo, for I guess they aire about all cleaned out of the country; and ef we don't strike some to-day, I reckon we'll pull back for Deadwood city in the mornin', said Riley, as we were jogging along in a most discontented and disgusted frame of mind; for we had been on the 'range' nearly three weeks and had not yet 'even got the smell of one,' as

Riley put it. We came out specially after buffalo ; but it looked very much as though we should have to load our waggons with antelope, immense herds of which we continually saw feeding on the high sage-brush bushes, the grass being already too thickly covered with snow for them to reach.

'Antelope quarters is only worth about fifty cents ; but I reckon we shall hev to load up on them or take home empty waggons,' continues Riley, giving his pony a vicious dig with his spurs, and impatiently jerking its bit.

'What curious-looking rocks are those ?' I remarked, pointing to some black masses lying on a distant hillside, which a sudden dip in the 'divide' had exposed to our view.

'Stop, quick !' says Riley, bending low in his saddle.

'Why ! what on earth is up ?' I muttered, following his example and turning my pony.

'Young feller,' he answered, 'did yew iver see rocks move ? Them's buffs, and our meat !'

After we had regained the shelter of the hill, Riley carefully ascertained the direction of the wind, and then proceeded to stalk his game.

'Follow me,' said he, putting his pony into a canter and taking exactly the opposite direction to that which I should have done.

After we had ridden a distance which I, in my excited state, calculated to be about five miles, we pulied up in a hollow between two rises and dismounted.

'Leave the ponies, and don't make a sound,' whispered Riley. 'Come on !'

Off we started up the hillside, making as little noise as possible ; but the frozen crust of the snow would occasionally break, creating a crunching sound which I thought must alarm our game. We had almost reached the crest of the hill when Riley suddenly ducked his head, dropped to the ground, and commenced to wriggle, snake-fashion, through the snow, and there was nothing for it but to follow his example. After we had proceeded in this tedious manner for a considerable distance across the level top of the hill Riley stopped, and beckoned me to come up to him ; for he, being vastly my superior in this mode of locomotion, I was some distance behind. When I reached him, he pointed through some long grass which protruded through the snow, and my astonished and delighted eyes feasted on eight adult buffalo (my supposed rocks), seven

of whom were lying down, while the eighth, apparently on guard, stood perfectly still, with his splendid head raised, and his widely-expanded nostrils sniffing the breeze, as though he almost suspected danger. They could not have been more than fifty yards below us, and every breathing movement of their shaggy hides was clearly visible. What a picture they made! how unlike the poor caged specimens one sees at home in the Zoo! It seemed almost a pity to disturb them; but an almost inaudible whisper from my companion—‘Is your chamber full? Get ready!’—recalled my mind to the fact that we were after buffalo meat.

Taking a couple of cartridges from my belt, I thrust one into the magazine, and tried the other, but it was full; and in my excitement I allowed the spring to close with a click, which called forth an angry frown from my friend.

‘I’ll take the leader,’ he muttered, bringing his rifle to his shoulder. ‘Aire yew fit? Then cut loose.’

Crack! Crack! rang out the repeaters, startling the still air and laying low two of the unconscious herd, while the remainder rose to their feet as one, and set off down the incline at full tilt: but a merciless and deadly discharge followed them, and ere they were out of range their numbers were reduced to one sound animal and another with a bad wound in the shoulder. There they lay, six huge brutes, some with broken backs trying madly, but vainly, to rise; others shot through the heart, and only showing by convulsive movements of their powerless limbs that they once lived; while another, who, I expect, had only been stunned, rose to his feet and attempted to stagger off, but a bullet from Riley’s ‘Nevermiss’ again brought him down, this time to rise no more.

‘Hurrah! hurrah!’ I shouted, and began to execute a war dance.

‘That’ll do,’ says Riley, checking me: ‘we ain’t Injins. Yew jest pick up them shells, I’ll run for the ponies, and we’ll make a clean job of it and bag the eight. Why, it’s jest like eatin’ pie is killing buffs, when yew can only find ’em.’

By the time I had collected the empty cartridges (there were twenty of them) Riley came galloping up with the ponies, riding one and leading the other. Handing me my nag he said, ‘Yew go after the crippled bull, and I’ll take the sound cow.’

We could see from our elevated position on the hill-top that the unhurt animal was making off in an easterly direction,



S. J. Galland.

And del off down the hill full till.

while the wounded one, unable to keep up with its companion, was taking a northerly course.

'Now for a glorious gallop!' I said to myself. 'No careful stalking and waiting behind hills! But I'll run up alongside and shoot him from the saddle.'

Giving old 'Injin' his head, I rammed in the spurs and away we went. The animal I bestrode was one we had 'traded for' with some Indians (hence his name), and an uglier, less ambitious plug, I never rode: however, by aid of spurs and 'quirt,' a very fair pace could be got out of him, and I confidently expected to have easily run up to the disabled buffalo, who had got about half a mile start, and seemed to be going very slowly.

Yes, we were gaining rapidly, and were now within half that distance of the labouring brute.

'Git!' I yelled to the spiritless 'Injin,' applying the persuaders with zeal. 'Git, you worthless son of a gun!' swinging the stinging quirt round his heaving flanks. But, somehow or other, when we got within four or five hundred yards, we did not seem to get any nearer; the buffalo appeared to be going at a slow, lobbing canter; his mouth was a mass of foam, and spots of his blood stained the snow at almost every step. I had often heard how great the endurance of a buffalo was, and now I was having a practical illustration of the fact. I began to think 'Injin' would give in first, for he now took the spurs and whip as a matter of course, and answered them in about the same manner that he would so many gnats—by simply jerking his tail, but not accelerating his speed one tittle.

'Hullo! I'm in luck!' thought I, as the now exhausted buffalo fell to his knees, turning his front towards me as he dropped. I rode up to within about forty yards and dismounted to take careful aim. 'Now, here's a chance to decide if it is true what I have heard about a bullet not being able to pierce an old bull's skull,' I said to myself, taking aim at the centre of the mass of hair growing on the veteran's forehead. I was at once convinced of the truth of this assertion, for, instead of the discharge rolling him over, he simply shook his head and staggered to his feet, making an attempt at a charge.

'I'm quite satisfied,' thought I, 'and I guess we'll have no more demonstrations;' so, planting a bullet low down between the neck and the left shoulder, I dropped him, a stream of blood pouring from his nostrils.

As I supposed, I was a long distance from camp, and knowing that by the time our skinners could reach my buffalo he would be frozen stiff, and he would then be most difficult to strip, I determined to skin him myself; so I set to work, and when I had got one side fairly well off (I only made three or four gashes through the hide) it struck me I should never be able to turn the beast over to skin the other side, for he was a tremendous fellow, and his high hump would make it impossible for me to roll him. I was just on the point of giving it up, and leaving my job in this unfinished state, when it occurred to me that with the help of my pony we might manage to turn him; so I untied my 'lariat' from the saddle, and made one end fast to the buffalo's forelegs, and, taking two or three turns with the other end of the rope round the horn of my saddle, I started the pony; the rope tightened and strained, and my shaggy friend came over with a thump. The task of finishing the operation was then comparatively easy, but I was a green hand, and by the time I had got the robe removed the short winter's day was fast growing into night, and a chilly breeze was freshening into a gale.

I cut out my quarry's tongue, and as I was fastening it to the saddle, preparatory to mounting, it suddenly occurred to me that I was not quite clear as to the direction in which camp lay, for in the excitement of the chase I had taken no notice of landmarks, but remembered our course had been by no means in a straight line, and that we must have galloped several miles.

'Yes, this is the way, of course: what a fool I was to think of being lost! Come up, "Injin," and we'll soon be in camp,' I said, working the sleepy pony into a lope.

I had not gone far, however, before I felt convinced that every inch I travelled was taking me so much further from my destination. My mind was filling with horrible stories I had heard of lost hunters perishing in the frightful cold of a night in midwinter on the prairies. What was I to do? To go on seemed madness; if I turned back I was not certain it would be right. Yes, there was no doubt about it—I was thoroughly and completely lost, and a night without shelter on the dismal plain stared me in the face. It was a horrible position: the heavy masses of black, angry-looking clouds, blocked out even the small comfort the stars would have afforded, and the prospect seemed to grow more and more dismal. 'Ah! What's

that?' I said, as a flake of snow settled on my face, and a score of others followed in rapid succession. 'There's a storm coming; and a bad one, too!' What was I to do? If I kept on riding, in all probability my tired pony would soon drop from exhaustion, and if I dismounted and tried to keep myself warm by walking I could not keep it up long through the fast-deepening snow. 'Ah! happy thought! Ride back to the dead buff, and make use of his thick jacket to keep out the dreadful cold, and wait till the morning light.'

Acting upon this suggestion I soon retraced my steps, and was once more in company with my defunct friend. I unsaddled 'Injin,' hobbled his forelegs with one of the reins, and turned him loose to scrape up a supper from beneath the snow.

I then found out I was awfully hungry, for I had tasted nothing since breakfast, and it had been a very fatiguing day. There was plenty of meat—the pick of a joint from a fine buffalo was at my disposal, but the needful fuel to cook the same was not to be had. 'Don't be particular; eat it "raw,"' said my hungry stomach, and with my knife I soon slashed off a strip from the shoulder: but when it came to the point of eating, even my famished interior said 'No you don't!' and I was forced to retire beneath the folds of my improvised couch supperless. It was not half bad when I had once got comfortably tucked in, the soft fur of the great hide forming a splendid bed; and I was soon lulled to sleep by the caterwaulings and yells of a band of coyotes, who had gathered round, attracted by the smell of the freshly killed meat.

Did I dream? Well, I should just think I did; and they were the most aggravating dreams I ever experienced. I was at a restaurant, but no waiter would attend to my frantic calls for food; they kept passing me, carrying piles of deliciously fragrant meats, and seemed neither to see or hear me. At last I could stand it no longer, so made a dash for one as he went past my seat, and clutched at the viands he was bearing; but the restaurant, waiters, dishes, everything, vanished into thin air, and my dreams changed to other scenes, but always of feasting, always of other people enjoying themselves, but not a mouthful for me! At last I awoke.

'Where on earth am I? It's fearfully cold! Oh, yes, I remember! Wonder if it's morning?' I said, trying to lift the heavy covering of skin and snow: but it was no easy task, for

the hide had frozen stiff during the night, and I had quite a struggle before I could crawl out of it.

The dim grey of the morning light was just appearing on the horizon, the storm had passed away and had been succeeded by an intense frost. Phew! it was cold! I banged my arms together and took a run to restore the circulation of my chilled blood. Soon things began to take shape beneath the fast-growing light.

'Surely I know the shape of that bluff?' I said to myself as a curiously outlined hill loomed through the uncertain light. 'No! Yes! It is! it must be Sioux Hill' (a well-known landmark situated about a mile to the south of our camp), and here had I been sleeping beneath a buffalo's skin within sound of a shot of our tent. I believe I never did a mile through the snow so quickly as I did that one between me and camp. The noise I made untying the tent-flap awoke the boys, who were snoring inside.

'Hello!—why, it's the Britisher!' says Riley, raising his head from beneath the blankets; 'guess you're sorter late fur supper, ain't yew?'

'I never thought to see you again,' says Clem, stretching himself.

'For goodness' sake get up, and let's have some breakfast,' I begged, 'for I am nearly famished!'

In a few minutes the little camp stove was in full blast, and the longed-for repast was soon ready. While the filling-up process was progressing I told my story to the hunters, calling forth many a laugh, but not one word of sympathy. I have no doubt they felt it, but they would never, as they called it, 'let on' that they did. I heard afterwards from one of them that they had spent more than half the night searching for me, and travelled many miles through the blinding storm; but it was almost useless, as one could scarcely see one's hand in front of one's face, and they gave me up as a 'gone coon.'

'If yew hed jest let old "Injin" hed his head, yew would hev come straight ter camp,' says Riley, comfortingly; 'and I reckon yew hobbled him pretty tight, or he'd a been here long afore now.'

THE OVAL BALL.

By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'

UT few of England's gamest sons
 Can mount and go the pace,
 The trigger's not the sport for all,
 Nor e'en the classic race.
 Though myriads crowd to view the strife
 And swell the wave-like roar
 That greets the last victorious steed
 On Heath, or Down, or Moor,
 Can fairly claim to write its name
 With pastimes of the class,
 That speak in one persuasive tone
 To 'Masher' and to 'Mass.'

Chorus.

But the old leather ball gives sport to all
 As it rockets above the throng,
 With the 'scrimmage,' the 'maul,' and the 'forward rush,'
 And the charge of the 'bulldogs' strong.

I sing of ball of oval form,
 The ball of Rugby plain;
 Long, long, in spite of cynic sneers,
 May we that sport retain!
 The 'Half-back' dashing up the ground,
 His course with care still steers;
 As foes approach on either hand
 To right or left he veers.
 His comrades form a flying guard,
 And close him in around,
 To give him chance behind the goal
 To bring the ball to 'ground.'

Aye, the old leather ball, &c.

But soon the pace begins to tell,
 His running grows more slack,
 He hardly 'scapes the desperate clutch
 Made by the second 'back.'
 His comrades all are scattered now,
 Aye, every single soul,
 While stalwart, calm, and 'fresh as paint,'
 Stands 'Keeper of the goal!'

He cannot storm the narrow pass
 That leads to so much fame,
 But darts oblique to cross the line
 And gain three points the same.
 Aye, the old leather ball, &c.

Perchance he bears the ball across,
 But bears it not alone,
 For other hands are round it clasped,
 Like dogs around a bone.
 'A Maul! A Maul!' The cry resounds;
 It is a thrilling sight
 To see four strong-limbed maulers tug
 And strain with all their might;
 But soon poor Half-back's heedless friend
 Allows his grasp to slide,
 Through squeezing hard and following not
 The ball's erratic glide.
 Oh, the old leather ball, &c.

Off! Off! and leave the other three
 To fight it out alone:
 Brave Half-back slips his shoulder in
 Whence his rash friend had gone,
 Then wrenching fierce he tears the grasp
 Of him who cannot see,
 And on the chest of Number Two
 He firmly plants his knee:
 One moment's pause, for both the men
 Are pale as any ghosts,
 A short, sharp fight, and Half-back 'downs'
 Two yards to right of posts.
 Oh, the old leather ball, &c.

'Now bring her out!' the Captain cries,
 And nods to Joey Wyles,
 Whose coolness is a byword
 On ev'ry ground for miles.
 Joe's mark upon the 'touching line'
 To dullest eye is plain,
 } Captain points where best of wind
 And range command he'll gain,
 The cool one's hand is 'neath the ball,
 His elbow on the green,
 The players breathless gaze and wait
 The issue of the scene.

Oh, the old leather ball, &c.

Right! Joseph calmly draws away,
 Forth dart the adverse band;
 The ball flies true beyond the reach
 Of e'en the highest hand,
 And fair between the posts it meets
 Half-back's ecstatic gaze—
 He'll mark the day through life as one
 Of life's 'red-letter' days.
 While Avon wends its sluggish way
 By Rugby's classic hall,
 May teams be found to take the field
 And chase the Oval Ball.
 Oh, the old leather ball, &c.

THE OLD STAGE-COACHMAN'S STORY.

By FREDERICK GALE.

'A rat? Dead for a ducat!'

N the winter of Christmas 1841 I left school, at the age of between eighteen and nineteen, after six years' and a half at Winchester, and I commemorated the day of my release from the *status pupillaris* in rather an original way. The old governor was with me, and we were outside one of the Dover coaches, sitting behind the box-seat, and I was remarking to him, 'This is the twenty-sixth time that I have travelled this road on my way to or from school, and now it is the last.' In those days the three terms' system was unknown. He was a good old governor, and kind, and, naturally enough, we talked over the first journey, which occurred when I was twelve years old, and the changes between that time and the then present; and Paterfamilias remarked, 'Well, you must be a man now.' I took him at his word by a bold stroke for freedom. Of course the old governor suspected that I smoked on the sly, and it struck me that the time had arrived when discipline should cease, and, taking out my cigar-case, I lit a weed. I felt that he was looking at me, though, it being a dark winter evening, I could not distinctly see him. At last came his remark: 'I hope you don't smoke much?'

'Oh, no, sir! not much; but every fellow smokes now, and this is a very cold evening.' We were going down the Kentish side of Shooters' Hill, which is one of the coldest points on the

Dover Road, as the full force of the north-wind from the Nore sweeps over the Thames and Medway rivers, and comes full tilt against the hillside, and the hill was a mask of ice.

In the coaching days, at the side of steep hills, the road was loosened with a 'pick,' and loose small stones and ground surface were left on a narrow margin near the footpath, to make a grip for the drag in winter. The drag was put down as we had a heavy load, and it required much good driving to keep the horses on their legs, as the road was very slippery and the frost had come on suddenly, and the horses were not 'roughed.'

Our argument about smoking, which seemed inevitable, was brought to an end by the coachman exclaiming suddenly, and very earnestly, 'Hold tight, gentlemen! the drag-chain has snapped, and we must go for it! Sit tight!' And to keep the coach off the wheelers the only thing was to go at a gallop, and risk it.

Never shall I forget those few minutes of our descent; the coach swerved and bounded like a pea on a drum; but we got safely down and the horses were well under command once more.

'Thank God for that!' said the coachman: 'we have had a rare squeak for it. I thought we must have been all down together; it *was* touch-and-go.'

I was telling this story at a friend's house in an old cathedral town last Christmas, and bringing out numerous old ghosts of guards and coachmen of the past whom we both remembered, and was extolling many of their virtues, and those of the identical coachman who brought us safe home that night, and was remarking 'what a gentleman he was in manners and deportment, and what a fine, handsome man,' and winding up with the observation, 'Ah! that good old breed is extinct now, and there is not one left I suppose.'

'You will find that very old coachman hale and hearty, and well-to-do, to-morrow afternoon, if you wish it, living in this very town,' remarked my friend; 'and he will be right glad to see you, for he rejoices in meeting any one who remembers the past days.'

I found all that my friend promised me, in the shape of a fine, handsome old gentleman, of eighty-six years of age, in perfect enjoyment of life, and in the midst of well-earned comforts of a pleasant home. So we met again after forty-four years. He gave me a hearty greeting and a hospitable offer of



Hold tight, gentlemen! the drag-chain has snapped, and we must go for it!

W. Wood

1850

port, sherry, or anything else, as he truly remarked, 'We coachmen know good liquor from bad ; and good cigars too ; and I have some still, and here they are.'

I had never seen him since the memorable evening of 1841, as I left the village through which his coach had passed daily ever since 1829, when I was a very little boy of six years old, until 1841. It may be supposed how pleasant was our talk. He remembered the name of every person in my former village who travelled by coach, and every incident of the stirring times of Reform riots, rick-burning riots, &c. ; and, during two long sittings with him, he ran over the pleasures and hardships of coaching days, bringing out and referring to old way-bills and other memoranda ; and also of his hotel days—for he kept a good hotel for some years when the coaches went off the road—and he and his dear old wife ultimately left the hotel, and were doing Darby and Joan in the evening of their life. He was remarking how the mode of life was changed since railways, and how large towns were now only suburbs of London, with clubs and private cliques ; and how people had given up taking their ease at their inn ; and he looked back with happy memory to the days when in the autumn and winter the principal well-to-do tradesmen, inhabitants and farmers, had a private dinner-party at one hotel or the other, once a-fortnight. It was the custom when a dinner was at the 'Lion' for the landlord of the 'Swan,' and a few of his friends, to join the party ; and *vice versa* when the dinner was at the 'Swan.' The motto was, 'Live and let live.' They had a good old-fashioned dinner, and kept the bottle moving, and drank sound port in those days, with a quiet rubber afterwards, and a finish up of sandwiches and bishop, or punch ; and the jolly old citizens were not above smoking a yard of clay. But it never became a debauch. In the winter they dined at half-past five, and by twelve o'clock they had enjoyed a long evening, and went home. I knew that the old coachman was getting into ghostland, and he soon began enumerating the names and characters of many whom I remembered ; and then I began to draw him.

'Did he remember old Alderman Bloggs, who had filled every office and post of honour in his native city, the last man who wore powder, shorts, and silk stockings, and a "remanet" of a pigtail ?'

Of course he remembered him ; and very soon he brought to life all the members of some of his dinner-parties.

'Oh yes, I remember Alderman Bloggs, and Alderman Wilson, and Mr. Morris, the steward for Squire Blank, &c. &c.' The reader's imagination can easily supply the rest.

'And Jack Lambert—did you know him, sir?' I did not, so accepted the sketch of him from the old coachman's lips.

'Ah! he was a rum fellow; the greatest practical joker ever known, but he made everyone forgive him in the end. He had a rare good house a little way out, and kept a rare good table and cellar of wine, and was hospitality itself. I will tell you a story about him which is quite true.

'Jack Lambert used to come to my dinner amongst others, and was very popular, and one of my best customers, for if any one contradicted him he was always out with "I'll lay you a bottle of wine of it." Mr. Tiptoe, the dancing-master, liked dining out, and was a standing dish, and always came in silk stockings and pumps, and was rather a butt of Jack Lambert's, as he was a very prim, neat little man, though they were good friends. After dinner one day, when the wine was going round, Tiptoe made the remark: "A rat in the room would drive me mad; I have the greatest horror of rats."

'Jack Lambert took up the running, expatiating on the poison of rat bites; and at Mr. Tiptoe's request the subject was dropped, as painful to himself.

'Some time afterwards we had another dinner-party, and Jack Lambert asked particularly if Tiptoe was coming, and I, so to say, "smelt a rat," as it was nearly time for Jack to break out again at some of his games, as he had been quiet for a long time.

'The evening came, and Jack Lambert said at dinner that he must go early that night; and when the dinner and wine were finished and the whist tables were set, he bade every one good night, and was off. However, he looked in again a few minutes afterwards for something he had left in a corner of the room, and, with a cheery "Good night all," disappeared.

'The rubber was commencing, when one of the company remarked, "Holloa! there is a rat!" Little Tiptoe jumped off his chair, sprung on to the whist-table, and down came table and candles, and Tiptoe with them.

'"Damme! there are two more coming out of the curtains!" said Tiptoe, in agony. He rushed to the door, but it was locked outside. The rooms swarmed with rats, which were running about

in all directions. We got shovel, poker, and tongs, and killed eleven in different corners of the room, whilst poor Tiptoe was in perfect agony; and when the battle was over, a preliminary court-martial on Jack Lambert was held behind his back by the insulted guests, and, pending the indignation meeting, another rat bolted down the chimney on to the rug, which quite broke up the party.

'It seemed that Jack Lambert got a rat-catcher down with a dozen rats in a bag, and half-opened the mouth of it, and put the bag behind the curtain.

'Of course he was sent to Coventry, and even legal proceedings were spoken of, but he had the sense to keep away till our anger was exhausted and the subject became a bore.

'After a while intimation was given that Jack would like to apologise and make it up. Things came round, and Jack Lambert returned to his old haunts, half by invitation, half on his own account. He made a clean breast of it, and apologised most heartily, and said, "Now, as Englishmen, let us bury it in a dinner at my house. I will give you the best haunch of mutton in England, and as much wine as you can carry away, and as much welcome." And so it was arranged, and so it came off. Jack Lambert so utterly won the hearts of his guests by his hospitality that Mr. Tiptoe joined in the laugh about the rats.

"That was the finest haunch of mutton I ever ate," exclaimed Mr. Tiptoe, smacking his lips over some grand old port, and holding his glass against the light in admiration of its glorious colour.

"It *was* a splendid haunch; but I can give you one as good," observed the landlord of the "Lion."

"I will bet you a sovereign you can't!" said Jack.

"Done!" answered he of the "Lion;" "and the present company shall be the judges. Come, gentlemen! you have not had a landlord's dinner for many a long day, and let us name Monday next, at six o'clock, and all of you must come and put your legs under my mahogany as my guests for once. I will give you a haunch of four-year-old mutton, which has been hung for three weeks at my house, and well looked after.

"I will lay you another sovereign you don't," said Jack.

"Done again!" answered the landlord. "I must know, for the haunch is in my larder now."

'The Monday morning came, and the landlord of the "Lion," on hospitality intent, sent for the cook.

"Cook," he said, in a cheerful voice, "that haunch of mutton must be just ready; it has hung now for three weeks to-day, and should be thoroughly tender."

"What haunch of mutton, sir?" asked the cook.

"*What* haunch of mutton! Why, the prize haunch which I told you to hang and dredge with flour every day!"

"Lor, sir! *that* haunch of mutton was took away last Thursday evening. Mr. Jack Lambert told me that you had made him a present of it for a dinner at his own house, when you settled the quarrel about Mr. Tiptoe and the rats; and as you *was* going to his party, I thought it must be right, and it was put in his dog-cart."

'The scene may be imagined, but cannot be described. Jack Lambert had given the landlord and his guests a dinner off his own mutton.

'When inquired for, Jack—as usual after one of his practical jokes—had gone away for a few days.'

He was incorrigible; but, doubtless, after his death—for the narrator of the story was the only survivor of the old clique—he was spoken of as 'Poor Jack Lambert!' for the harm in him was on the surface only, and he never was guilty of shabby practice in business or a shabby action, and was always ready and willing to answer handsomely to any appeal for a friend in need.

OLD OXFORD DAYS.

AN AYLESBURY STEEPLECHASE.

By 'PECKWATER.'



LENT Term was now over, and a general rush of all interested in sport was made for Aylesbury. Every lodging in the town had been secured, and the 'White Hart,' the head-quarters of the promoters of the University Steeplechases, was more than full. Extra beds had to be improvised in sitting-rooms; and the resources of the establishment had been taxed to the uttermost. The genial landlord, himself a thorough sportsman, had been in a great state of perplexity as to the course to be run over. The grand old line over which Vivian and, later on, Vainhope, had led large fields, was not available just then. He had, however, secured one, commencing on the Prebendal Farm just outside the town, and, with the assistance of gentlemen who were

staying for the hunting season, had marked out a course, which was stiff enough to try the nerves of the boldest riders and to test the powers of horses of the highest class.

It had been agreed that the riders and stewards should meet at the farm at ten o'clock on the following morning to walk over the line; and after a good dinner in the large room (the room in which 'Captain Barlow' had jumped the dining-table on a horse of Charles Symonds' the year before), an adjournment was made to the card-room. Most of those who were going to ride next day wisely stayed indoors, and sat down to whist, others who had no such important engagement before them sallied forth into the town in quest of adventures.

The railway was now being constructed, and a large number of navvies and other workmen were in the town; and, as was to be expected, it was not long before the University men and the operatives came into collision.

A ball was being held at the 'Green Dragon,' attended by the workmen, with their wives and sweethearts. Here was a grand opening for the gownsmen, of whom some twenty or thirty had gained admission to the dancing-room. As they spent their money freely, and treated the company all round, they were right welcome to enjoy themselves, and all went well.

Soon, however, a feeling of uneasiness and jealousy possessed the stalwart navigators; their 'Jennies' preferred dancing with the swells, and then arose the first symptoms of a shindy. That *causa teterrima belli*, woman—inconstant, 'coy and hard to please'—was here, as in numberless other instances, the source of trouble. The more prudent advised a retreat—but, no, this would be *infra dig*. Then one man, either accidentally or for sheer mischief, put his foot through the big double bass. The musicians, aware that a storm was brewing, had ceased playing and were preparing to retire to a safer position, and this unwieldy instrument had been propped against the wall. Smash! crash! and an angry roar, and the battle began in earnest—the swells were to be ejected from the room.

But there were two parties to this arrangement, and for a time the University men held their own. Then, seeing their lawful protectors getting the worst of it, the band of Amazons took sides in earnest. Throwing themselves on their rear, they so discomfited their husbands' and lovers' assailants, and so hampered their attack, that the fortune of the night no longer

remained in doubt—in sober prose, the University men got a thundering licking, which they undoubtedly asked for. Some few had got separated from the main body, and were hustled into a room adjoining the ball-room; the rest managed to escape, minus hats, scarves, collars, and other articles of their apparel. In a dilapidated condition, with noses bleeding and out of all drawing, eyes blackened, and other personal injuries, they made their appearance at the hotel.

‘Serve ’em right,’ said a veteran; ‘what do they want to come over here to kick up a row for?’ when the news of the scrimmage reached the card-room. But when the names of D——y W——e and Sl——y B——ll were shouted out as among those still in the power of the enemy, all hesitation and indifference vanished. Cards were thrown down, and ‘To the rescue!’ was the universal cry.

On reaching the public-house the University men found doors and windows all closed, and the place apparently deserted; but this was merely a ruse—the enemy were within, and ready to repel the assault. Matters would certainly have been serious; axes and crowbars were being brought to the front, and doors and shutters would soon have yielded to their force, when the Hon. Robert Grimston, who was then residing in the town for the hunting season, appeared on the scene, and persuaded the attacking party to withdraw and to leave him to settle the affair. This he was soon able to do. The prisoners were released and the damage squared. It was feared that they would be found to have been seriously knocked about, but beyond the injuries inflicted in the scrimmage no extra punishment had been received by the captives—they had been detained as hostages until the damage done by their party should be made good.

And so for the night the unfortunate affair ended. A great amount of ill-feeling, however, had been stirred up between the University men and the roughs of the place, which, next day, the latter had an opportunity of displaying, to the discomfiture of those who took part in the principal race.

The line selected for the steeplechases rather startled those who had assembled to walk over it in the morning. One of the stewards—a gentleman who had a large stud of hunters in the town, which Jem Mason chiefly rode with the Baron’s stag-hounds—insisted upon the fences being made as difficult as possible. Several doubles had to be negotiated, and this gentle-

man proposed that the start should take place in a lane, the fence out of it being an awkward one of this description.

‘This is rather unusual,’ said Captain Barlow, in his blandest tones. ‘Would you, Mr. H——ll, kindly ride at the fence just to see how a horse would get his stride in; or would you let me ride him?’

Mr. H——ll was mounted on one of his noted horses, which, like the rest of his stud, was for sale. He bragged a great deal about what he could do over such a line; ‘Nothing in it to stop a jackass,’ he had said when some of the riders ventured to object. He could hardly refuse the ‘Captain’s’ request after this, so at it he went. It was a double requiring a certain amount of steam up to get through the brushing thorn fences—this, starting out of a lane, was hardly practicable, and Mr. H——ll’s horse got hung up in the second hedge, landed with his fore feet in the ditch, and gave his rider a bursting fall into the next field.

Every one was delighted; and it was decided that the start should take place in the open field on the other side of this objectionable fence. There were awkward obstacles enough without this one; and the idea of starting a dozen horses out of a lane to jump an awkward fence between flags was absurd and mischievous. Of course, the object was to cause as many falls as possible; and as Mr. H——ll was then a big man in the place, the other stewards let him have his own way.

There were horses in Oxford then that could hold their own pretty well. Several were public performers, and had won open steeplechases; others, belonging to members of the University, were first-class hunters. So a very respectable field had assembled at the starting-post. When one remembers the class of horse to be seen ridden in the drags and at the Aylesbury meetings, the question arises, Could such horses be procured now-a-days for a like outlay? Certainly not! The reason of this is, that the farmers then bred horses of a far superior stamp to those of the present day. Take the counties of Salop, Hereford, Worcester, and Gloucester. The breeding of first-class hunters was in this district part of a farmer’s business thirty or forty years ago. Many had mares, whose strain of blood had been in their families for generations. The services of sires of good-staying blood—not as now, the speedy, broken-down cast-off of a racing stable—were generally available, and the produce was virtually thoroughbred. Hunting was the farmers’ legiti-

mate amusement, many of whom enjoyed their sport and made a good profit out of the horses they rode. This is all altered now; the mares are gone, and the class of men who could ride to hounds and farm their land in the way that did credit to themselves and their landlords has almost disappeared as well.

Some of these home-bred ones from the adjacent district found their way to the Oxford stables, a blemish, perhaps, or some defect in temper, having rendered them unsaleable at a high figure.

When once landed in the University they were bound to be kept in good condition, and, what is more, they were bound to go, or their riders would want to know the reason why. It was virtually the survival of the fittest in their case, and self-preservation proved a strong inducement with them to do their best and keep a leg to spare. Besides the home-bred ones, Irish horses of merit were brought over by the Messrs. Wheeler, large dealers, who supplied the stable-keepers. Phoenix and Idleboy, both noted fencers at that time, were Irish. Then some of the stable-keepers had a steeplechaser or two in training on their own account; and as the stakes were open to them as well as to members of the University, a creditable field for the Aylesbury chases could always be reckoned on.

The principal race at this meeting was won by Young Lottery, a horse that had run well in first-class chases and had won several minor races. The second to him had been bought from Mr. Tollit by his rider at a low figure. Tollit had received a wonderful character with the horse, but he was sadly blemished, and there was a doubt as to his standing training. He had won the hunt race at Charlbury a fortnight before, but, unfortunately, had been pricked in the hind foot by the blacksmith at that village. So lame had he been he could hardly put his toe to the ground; this, however, wore off as he warmed to his work, and he performed quite well enough to warrant the assumption that if he could have had proper exercise instead of standing in the stable for days before the race he would have won.

Young Lottery, however, was ridden by a man who was second to none as a steeplechase jock, whether amateur or professional. *Per mare, per terram*, might well have been his motto, for he was equally formidable as stroke of the 'Varsity eight, and introduced a style of rowing which has contributed since more than anything else to Oxford victories.

The race was won by a neck only, but it was won with ease, and under any circumstances the result would probably have been the same. The pet horseman of the University was undoubtedly the 'gallant Captain Barlow,' and well did he deserve his popularity. His qualifications as a gentleman-rider had been proved in many a contest, private and public; and to-day he was backed to win at the shortest odds: but it was not to be.

The course was full of all sorts of made-up traps and difficulties. The first large fence was a double that had been stiffly pleached, both thorn-fences having been laid, and staked, and bound. It was simply impossible for a horse to double on and off the bank between the two hedges, and the only chance that appeared of getting over was to try and fly the lot. Some of the younger riders objected strongly to this fence, but the seniors took little heed of it. There are, however, more ways of killing a dog than by hanging; and when in the race the field drew near, two most convenient gaps were to be seen in each of the hedges, over which the horses popped without difficulty. This was not noticed by the leader, and he attempted to fly the whole, landing in the second ditch, luckily without breaking his horse's back. It was simply an impossible fence, and would not have been tolerated at a public meeting.

Then, in the middle of a grass field, a narrow stream had been converted into a broad water-jump, to be taken both going and returning, a flight of hurdles facing the water either way. And here was an opportunity for mischief. The water had been stanked most carefully, and confined within its banks by soil and turf. As soon as the field had passed the roughs began their work; this they had evidently well planned. They stopped the flow of the stream, broke down the barriers which confined the water, and let it flow over the approach to the water-jump on the return journey. This was the work of a few seconds. In a few minutes the water had extended for some thirty yards, and no sign of any definite water-jump beyond a flight of hurdles standing half submerged was visible.

'Here they come!' was the cry, and a large crowd had assembled to watch the result of their work. Eight of the field were close together, and had begun to race in earnest. The riders stared at what was before them—what could it mean? had they got out of the line? No! there were the flags, and the crowd, and the flight of hurdles, just discernible. There was

no time for deliberation—splash! dash! they gallop into the flood. Some of the horses jump at the hurdles, and land in the deep water on the other side; others never rise at all at them, and send their riders, neck and crop, into the water. About four struggle through; one of these had cleared the hurdles, but his horse failed to clear the water, and had chucked his rider over his head. The rider's hands were on the ground, and he was seated on his horse's head; in struggling to get up the horse lifted him bodily off the ground, and, throwing his head up, tossed him back down his neck on to his withers, and so regained the saddle. This was a rare triumph for the roughs, and through it they managed to spoil the race. The favourite, with Captain Barlow, had come to unutterable grief, but the four that were now left in the race were the most fancied after him. Another mile had to be traversed, and then the winning field. Young Lottery had taken a considerable lead, having been the first to get clear of the slough. He was gradually overhauled, and a good finish between three resulted in his winning by a neck.

Some considerable time was wanted to remedy the mischief that had been done and make the course fit for the succeeding races; and it was with great difficulty that a free fight between the University men and the roughs was kept under. The former would have received the aid of a large number of the spectators, and would, no doubt, have driven their opponents off the ground. The police, however, interfered, and further mischief was fortunately prevented.

In one of the minor races old Bob Barker, a jockey of the old school, whose name is to be found in the return of crack chases of the old days, displayed his eccentricity. It was said that he was half silly, owing to the bad falls he had sustained while riding; but the old fellow was sharp enough when it suited him. He had had a regular cropper over a fence some short distance from the winning field, and had received a slight kick on the head, which for a time stunned him. The spectators rushed to the spot—a hurdle was procured, and the old jockey, with a mournful procession, was borne to the stand. 'Poor old Barker is killed at last!' a person remarked near him. 'Not exactly,' the old fellow said, raising himself with a grin. 'Then what on earth did you let the men carry you home on a hurdle for?' was asked. 'Why, don't you see, it was a tidy distance to walk, and they never stopped to see whether I was hurt or

no, so I thought it would save me a lot of trouble.' The old fellow was a rare judge of pace, and had been a fine horseman. Even then, on Tom Golby's Ploughboy, or George Symonds' Parson's Daughter, very few provincials could give him the go-by.

THE GALLOPING WHIP.

By 'BROOKSBY.'

If life is a business, existence is fun,
Where duty and pleasure and sport are in one;
That's why he wears ever a smile on his lip—
'Tis a Labour of Love to the Galloping Whip.

The moon of September's his light in the morn,
When the cub's to be killed and they've carried the corn;
The moon of December's his lamp for the trip,
As home with the pack jogs the Galloping Whip.

For hours never vex him, and work cannot tire,
That dapper pink fits on a framework of wire;
He'll go without sup, and he'll go without sip
From daylight to dark, will the Galloping Whip.

The phiz of bold Reynard is shaped on his mug,
Mouth wide as an oxe, as deep as a jug;
That feature was fashioned to scream, not to nip,
And a bumper's no charm for the Galloping Whip.

The last to leave covert, he'll cheer on the pack;
Twenty couple are out, then away with a crack;
In a mile he has given the quickest the slip—
The wind from their sails takes the Galloping Whip.

When we're jammed in a corner, the timber too strong,
The bullfinch too thick, and our courage all gone—
Hie! give us a lead! and over he'll flip:
But it's little improved by the Galloping Whip.

Does he ride for repute? No, his eye is ahead;
He works for the huntsman, and works for his bread.
Wherever he steers men are glad of the tip:
The bruisers delight in the Galloping Whip.

Ever sparing of rate and indulgent of youth,
His cheer urges Faulty get forrard to Truth;
But a rioter determined will never outstrip
The swift-venging thong of the Galloping Whip.

They've run twenty minutes as close as a wedge.
 By Jove! now they've split—two lines since the hedge!
 Old Reefer is right. Up the furrow they rip;
 And round swing the rest with the Galloping Whip.

A game fox is sinking. The Whip isn't here!
 Look, a cap down the wind! 'Charles has him, I swear!'
 And Reynard, poor devil! is well in the grip
 Of Whitecollar Will and his Galloping Whip.

JOHN PEEL'S GREY COAT.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

'Do you ken John Peel in his coat so grey?
 Do you ken John Peel at the breaking o' the day?
 Do you ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
 Wi' his hounds and his horn in the morning?'



KENNED John Peel well,' was the unexpected reply to this inquiry, which is made at every hunt festival in the well-known song. 'I mind him well, and followed him many a time when I was a laddie.'

It was in the smoking-room of the 'Old England' at Windermere that this was uttered, and the speaker was a stout, thick-set, honest-faced, Border-man, who had, with his tumbler of grog in his hand, been listening to the words of the song so well known to every man who has listened to a screeching view halloo! or a soul-stirring tally-ho!

'Then why in his coat of grey? Red, or rather, I might say, pink, has always been the proper colour for a Master of the Hounds.'

'Man, I can tell you that too,' said the genial-faced old fellow. 'But go on with your song, man—I like the song; I am sorry I interrupted you. Gang on, man.'

My friend continued the song, and it was hard to say which he enjoyed most—the singing, to which he beat time with his tumbler, sipping up a little drop of its cherished contents, or when the chorus came round.

'Yes, Sir,' he said, when the song was finished, 'I kenned John Peel well; and if we were up at Troutbeck I should show you the very place where he lived for many a day.'

'Yes; but you have not told us how his coat was so grey, and not so pink or so scarlet like other huntsmen's coats. I

suppose the man who wrote the verses found that grey suited his rhyme better?’

‘Nothing of the kind : the old gentleman who wrote the words to the song is living yet, and a very nice old gentleman he is. But it is an auld, auld story, and you’ll excuse me if I have a little extra drop to refresh my memory, which used to be one of the best, but is, like the most of those of the old folks, terrible dull at commencing.’

It was the night before our visit to Troutbeck, and, as most hunting-men know, John Peel lived in that famous old lake village.

‘Everybody doesna sing the song you sing,’ said the old fellow, contemplatively, after a pause.

‘What, of John Peel?’ said my friend. ‘I sing the authorised version.’

‘I don’t know what that may be ; but I kenned John Peel, and old John Peel never did anything o’ the kind that your authorised version says. John Peel did not follow the hounds on a horse at all, man, and never jumped a five-barred gate in his life.’

‘Yes, my dear friend, but why did John insist on wearing a grey coat? That is what we want to know.’

‘And that is just what I promised to tell ye, so just draw in your chairs.’

* * * * *

‘Fox-hunting up Westmoreland way, ye must ken,’ said the old man, ‘is not your fox-hunting of the South. The natural wild fox on our hills is a very wary animal; it is not petted up in any way like your fox of the southern counties whatever. It feeds *where* it can and *how* it can, and therefore has far more cunning than your wild fox of the Shires, which is but a pampered silly beast altogether. Indeed, there is as much difference between a hill fox and a shire one as there is between a wild woodland and a hand-reared cock pheasant, and therefore it requires far more skill to hunt him.’

‘*Phew!*’ whistled my friend. ‘Shade of Nimrod! is it so? I suppose you kill your fox with a cross-buttock, or a “hype,” or a Cumberland grip, or some other wrestling dodge?’

‘Nothing of the kind, friend ; we hunt him fair, and hard fair hunting it is over hill, and dale, and shap, and fell, and scaur, over a stiffer country than ever yet man rode. But don’t interrupt me, if you please.

'It was a lovely morning in the end of April when we started out from Troutbeck. John, who had taken over the pack, walking on slowly ahead in an old bright green hunting-coat. (You're not to be asking any questions just yet as to why it was not grey, for I'll tell ye at the end.) Shepherds were there from Langdale and Rydal, and nearly every place on the lake side, for there had been a terrible number of complaints about killing lambs. It was a queer meet ye will think, for every man brought a dog and every one carried a gun; for the death of the fox, whether it runs five yards, or whether it runs five miles, is what is wanted in the Border country to this day.

'Off we set for the hills, the air being still and everything as silent as Windermere herself, lying peacefully in the far distance below. Ye might indeed have heard the bells o' the Sextons, ye ken—the Sextons that Coleridge writes about, though I never heard them myself.

"In Langdale Pikes and Witches' Lair,
And Dungeon Gill so foully vent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back one after t'other
The death-note of their living brother.
And oft as by their knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks their doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale."

'It was a far merrier peal than the devil's bells that we heard that morning, however; for from a gorse-clad cairn an old greyhaired fox of the hills broke away at a tearing pace; Peel, who was hard to beat at a climb, racing up the steep hillsides after them like a mountain goat. Hounds and huntsmen disappeared from view just as the remainder of us followers got to the hill-top, and we caught sight of them again streaming along like a pack of hyænas on the face of a grassy slope three miles ahead. We looked liked being distanced altogether, when Wat o' Rydal, who knew every corner of the hills as well as the haunts of the mountain foxes, said,—

"Come on men! follow me."

'Following Wat, however, was easier said than done, for he would scramble along rocky shelves on the very edge of deep gorges, where there was not breadth for more than one foot at a time. No man would do it I dare say in cold blood for a ten-



A day with John Fee

John Fee

pound note, but in the heat of a mountain fox-hunt one will almost do anything: just, I dare say, as he will do on a horse's back in your South-country hunting-fields. Well, after a run of four miles, sometimes climbing mountain faces, sometimes groping through scrub and hazel, sometimes wading through a gorge breast-deep, with a strong current, and momentarily expecting to be drowned, we came upon old John himself, looking as cool and fresh as if he had just walked out from his breakfast into the morning air. The fox had gone to ground amongst the huge stone boulders, and the terriers—old blue-haired fox-terriers you rarely meet with now-a-days—were treading the tunnels beneath and trying to force him out: a matter of no small difficulty, as the huge cairn was fully an acre in breadth.

'The worthy huntsman's object was to surround the cairn as quickly as he could with those of the party who had guns, in order that the fox might be allowed no chance of escape. We were too late of coming up, however; for, just as we drew breath, the old huntsman viewed our fox stealing across the face of the precipice just out of gun-shot. In a minute or two he was on the actual spot, and his halloo, if it was not equal to awakening the dead, woke ringing echoes all through the lake-land. Off again! Wat o' Rydal acting as pilot to the field; but where we *were*, or where, indeed, we were going, none of us had the slightest idea, save, possibly, Wat.

"'He's pressing our fox downhill to the lake," said Wat (who well understood the tactics of the old hill fox-hunter); "so keep together boys, and assist him."

'Downhill we followed, right into a cloud of grey mist, which almost wetted us to the skin, and though we could see neither hounds nor huntsmen, we knew that they were ahead of us. All at once it was apparent that the fox had wheeled sharp round to the mountains. A hopeless case now, with the mist coming so heavily. What had caused him to wheel so smartly round? This was explained to us when we came up, for there stood the Master himself, looking anything but well pleased; and there, in front of him, was one of our field in the morning—the only red coat we had remarked upon—a Troutbeck soldier home on furlough, looking, as John said, like a sunburnt harvest moon, and enough to frighten a hundred foxes. Well, the hounds were whipped off, for the mist came down thick, grey, and heavy; and we journeyed silently and sadly back to

Troutbeck, thoroughly agreed that red was no uniform for the hills, and that grey like the very mist, so as to be almost undetectable, was the thing. And the next season John Peel's coat was grey, and grey has been the hunting colour for the hill pack ever since. So that's my story !'

* * * * *

'And well told, old fellow ! and one glass more we'll have to the man

" Who kenned John Peel, and Ruby too,
Ranter, and Ringwood, and Bellman, and true,
From a find to a check, from a check to a view,
From a view to a death in the morning."

JUNGLE JOTTINGS.—PINNING A PANTHER.

By 'DOOKER.'

REMEMBER, some years ago, reading in an Indian paper the following remarks on Australian horses, commonly called 'Walers,' with reference to their pluck, endurance, and capability of standing the exposure and vicissitudes of an Indian climate:—'They are about the most useless brutes that ever encumbered an Indian stable, though in their own country excellent ; they are ill-bred, vicious, ugly, soft-hearted, and sickly brutes, that will go off without a kick for life, with no more provocation than a little exposure to an Indian sun.' This criticism is, I think, hardly fair. There must be many who have ridden good 'Walers,' and seen their performances on the turf ; and I am sure such accusations as the above could not be brought against such horses as Tomboy, Milliner, Vanderdecken, and numerous other heroes of the Indian turf.

The object, however, I have in relating the following anecdote is to prove that a 'Waler' (and the remark, perhaps, applies to every other breed) may be a rank bad 'un apparently, under certain conditions, and yet prove a very fair horse under others.

Some years ago I was quartered with my regiment at a certain cantonment (fill up the name, gentle reader, as you list), where there was an annual sale of *cast* horses from the Artillery and Native Cavalry—which sales, impecunious subalterns found very useful, enabling them to mount themselves on nags, who

although they were generally 'screws,' often afforded their owners lots of fun, and could be knocked about in a manner they would have hardly dared to treat a high-priced Arab.

Well, at one of these sales there was put up for auction a black 'Waler,' standing nearly 16 hands; well-bred, with game clean head, neck well set on, long sloping shoulders, clean flat legs, and strong muscular quarters. He was, however, a 'leetle' slack in his loins, and so miserably thin and out of condition, that he looked as if he had been fed on the proverbial 'kick in the ribs and bucket of water!' Well, this animal was knocked down to an old Colonel of the Native Infantry (whom we will call Pope) for the magnificent sum of two rupees, or about four shillings. In fact, no one else would have anything to say to him, for he had been cast from a field battery for debility.

Some six months afterwards, when I was leaving the gorgeous East, the local Pigsticking Club gave us a farewell meet, and through the kindness of friends I had my choice of several good mounts, for I had sold all my own horses. Behold us, then, one pleasant October morning, a merry party of ten, cantering out to the meet at Ghonee, some twelve miles distant. Here we found the tents pitched, and an appetising breakfast laid out—not the least toothsome item of which was 'Soused Countenance' (or boar's head, boned and pickled with chilis and other savoury condiments), which was always the *pièce de résistance de rigueur* at our Hunt breakfasts. We were soon joined by some five or six other sportsmen, and amongst them Colonel Pope, the owner of the black Waler, whom he had called Téndwâ (Panther), because, he said, 'he was such a vicious brute.'

The Colonel was renowned as a shot, and was reported to feed his numerous progeny on nothing but *antelope* venison—the product of his rifle: he was also noted for carefulness of his money-bags and the poor quality of his horseflesh. He was a good old fellow, however, and I believe in my heart that his apparent parsimony was only caused by his large and rapidly increasing family: in fact, it was the old story of 'filling the nursery and emptying the stable.' Whilst discussing an after-breakfast cheroot, the Colonel took me aside in a mysterious manner, and said,—

'Will you do me a favour?'

'With all my heart, Colonel,' I replied.

‘Well,’ he rejoined, ‘I want you to ride Téndwâ to-day. Every one laughs at me about him, but I am convinced he is a good horse, and I want to run him for the Hog-hunters’ Cup next January ; but, as you know, he *must* qualify, by having a first spear taken off him. I am too old to ride him, and have lost my nerve, and I can’t get any of these youngsters to do it for me ; but I thought, perhaps, *you* would not mind seeing what you can do with him. Mind you, he is a vicious brute, and as likely to eat you as not if he gets you off ; but if you’ll find neck, I’ll find horse, and you may ride him as you like. Now, will you be a good fellow, and do as I ask ?’

I saw I was in for it ; and though I didn’t much fancy my mount, and the amount of chaff I should receive in consequence, the old Colonel’s face was so piteous in its expression of entreaty, that I promised I would ride his horse, only stipulating that it should be during the first beat, when I thought there would not be much chance of a run.

When we were preparing to start, the redoubtable Téndwâ was brought forth, with a buck-jumping saddle on, surcingle and running martingale, and very powerful bit, which latter piece of tackle I had immediately changed for a plain snaffle.

As I was preparing to mount, the Colonel rushed up to me in a great state of excitement, crying out,—

‘For goodness’ sake look out ! As soon as you get your foot in the stirrup, he’ll pretend he’s going to lie down, and then buck and try to bite you !’

‘Nice brute !’ I muttered, as I gathered up the reins. However, I mounted sharp, and was on the look-out for squalls. But Téndwâ behaved in the most sedate manner, and walked away with me quietly, showing no indication of the vices with which he had been credited. I set him going to feel his paces, and was charmed—such free, easy, and powerful action I had seldom felt ; and he answered his bit and twisted and turned like a pony.

I had cantered on some three hundred yards a-head of the rest of the party, when I met a native running towards us in a great state of perturbation, and breathless with excitement.

‘Protector of the poor !’ he jabbered out, ‘an *enormous* boar has just entered yonder clump of “sindee” bushes. The Sahib is my father and mother : will he slay this unclean, ill-begotten animal, who has been devastating the fields of his slave ?’

I hardly believed the black gentleman's statement, as I thought it was merely invented for the sake of obtaining 'backsheesh'; but on the Captain of the Hunt arriving on the scene, and making further inquiries, he thought it worth while to beat the little patch of cover, which was all on our way, promising our black friend plenty of '*bamboo backsheesh*' (in other words, a good hiding) if his statement should prove untrue.

The beaters accordingly were got together, and the spears duly posted. The party were equally divided—one half being under the orders of the Captain of the Hunt, and the remainder under my command. The covert was only about a couple of acres in extent, and composed of dense 'sindee' bushes, with some large mango trees in the centre.

All being in readiness, the beat began with the usual hullabaloo and noise dear to the native heart. No boar emerged, however; but shortly the noise suddenly ceased, and there arose a cry of 'Bagh! bagh!' (Tiger! tiger!), and the beaters were seen flying out scattered in all directions. As soon as they could be collected and induced to answer coherently, they informed us that they had come upon a tigress and cubs.

Here was a chance for us ambitious youngsters. A tiger marked down in an isolated spot, with lovely riding ground all round, and no cover thick enough to hold such large game as a tiger for miles around. Visions of emulating the deeds of Travers, Outram, Gilbert, Gillespie, and other well-known Indian sportsmen arose before my eyes; but, alas! such visions were doomed to disappointment, or only partial realisation.

The question now arose how to get the tiger out, for the beaters were blue, or rather, *white* with funk, and, with one or two exceptions, could not be induced to beat again. Finally, after much consultation, it was decided that we should go in on foot ourselves (leaving our horses and spears posted handy), taking our guns with alternate barrels loaded with shot and ball, and try and induce 'Mrs. Stripes' to leave her stronghold.

Accordingly we entered the covert in a body, and commenced 'independent firing' with shot into all the thickest parts, reserving our bullets in case of a charge. This went on for some time, and we had traversed the whole length of the covert without anything appearing, and thinking that the tigress could only have existed in the heated imagination of the beaters, we had decided on giving it up, when one of our party exclaimed,—

'Hold on, you fellows! Just wait till I send back to camp for old "Muzzle." I'll send him in; and if the devil himself is there, he will have him out in a brace of shakes!'

'Muzzle' was accordingly sent for, and, pending his arrival, let me describe him. He was a nondescript, but still powerful-looking brute—fawn, with a black muzzle—a cross between a bulldog and a Polygar hound: a bulldog's head, neck, and deep chest, but with a greyhound's thin flank and muscular quarters, and high on the legs. Altogether he was a 'rum 'un to look at;' but he belied his looks, as the sequel will show.

The party being posted as before, and 'Muzzle,' arriving in due time, straining at his leash, the excitement began *da capo*. With a cheer from his master, the old dog dashed into cover with an excited whimper, whilst we all remained with eyes strained and ears on the *qui vive*. Some minutes had elapsed when we heard old 'Muzzle's' short and angry bark—when I saw *something* sneak out and slip down into a little nullah, on the banks of which my party and I were posted. Presently the '*something*' dashed out of the nullah, and springing up the opposite bank disclosed the spotted hide of a fine panther! As I gave a yell to 'ride,' and set old Téndwâ going, the panther stopped short, looked round for an instant, and then, with a succession of enormous bounds, made tracks for a field of 'dâl' (a crop that grows about two and a half feet high) some half mile away.

The owner of 'Muzzle,' a first-rate rider and 'spear,' and a light weight, mounted on a very fast Arab only just out of training, and myself, were first over the nullah; and now a race commenced between us. It was cramming the whole way, and we were both doing our best. I was leading about a length. When I glanced back, my rival was creeping up inch by inch, his horse's head reaches Téndwâ's quarters, then my knee: a vicious dig, which the old horse answers gamely; again and again it is repeated. Three more strides and the spear is mine; but, alas! before those three strides are completed, the panther enters the dâl, and my rival, collecting his horse for one last effort, passes me with a lightning-like rush, and I am afraid I uttered a word, which I trust may since have been blotted out by the recording angel. Luck, however, was on my side, for, as my rival passed me, his horse swerved, and one of his stirrup-leathers breaking, nearly caused him to lose his seat as he leant forward to deliver his spear. This again left me with the lead,



I again got up to
the panther"

and catching sight of the panther as she sneaked along between the furrows, I rushed old Téndwâ at her, mentally ejaculating, 'Now for the spear! I can't miss it!' Alas! for human 'certainties.' Just as I put my spear down the big 'sola topeè' or sun-hat I was wearing, caught by a puff of wind, was tipped over my eyes, and I galloped on temporarily blinded, with a horribly creepy sensation that the next instant I should feel the panther's teeth and claws in my back! Sailors have a saying that,

'There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
Who looks after the life of poor Jack,'

and I am sure Ensigns must be equally fortunate, for, on this occasion, my guardian angel threw his protecting ægis over me; for I did *not* get the panther a-top of me, and I *did* get the 'spear.' Dashing my hat off, and turning rapidly, I again got up to the panther, and, before she could make up her mind to charge, drove my spear through her and galloped on. Téndwâ's blood was now up, however, and it was some time before I could pull him up. When I managed to do so, I found that the panther had turned back towards where we had originally found her, and had taken refuge in a mass of thorns and sindée bushes that bordered a sort of narrow lane. We could see her plainly, but the difficulty was how to get *at* her, as she was lying on the *left* side, and so not the spear-hand. Presently, to our horror, we saw all the beaters running up straight towards her, yelling and laughing, and evidently quite unaware of her proximity to them. We shouted to them to keep back, but amid such a din it was impossible to make our voices heard, and let them understand their danger. There was bound to be mischief, so I endeavoured to minimise it as much as possible, and, ramming spurs into old Téndwâ, I shoved him along up the lane, determined 'to do or die!'

I had got, I suppose, within about five or six yards from where the panther was plainly discernible, growling and showing her teeth, when, with a snort, my horse stopped dead short, and no amount of persuasion on my part could induce him to go on. He kicked, he bucked, he reared, twisted round and round, and went every way but the one I wanted him to go. Here was a nice fix—a wounded panther, naturally not in the sweetest of tempers, and all those poor devils of coolies rushing into danger they knew nothing of. We yelled ourselves hoarse, telling them to keep back (I ought, perhaps, to mention that the rest of the party, with the exception of

myself, were in the field on the right-hand side of the lane, whilst the two thick and thorny fences, besides the lane, divided them from the panther), but it was of no avail; and presently, to my horror, I saw the panther dash out into the crowd with a 'wough-wough!' Then there was an agonised shriek, mingled with muffled growls, and the yells were redoubled. Owing to the thickness of the hedge, and being on a lower level from my position in the lane I could not actually *see* what was taking place, though I could form a pretty good idea from the screams of 'Murjahiga — murjahiga!' which in plain English may be interpreted as 'Blue murder!' otherwise, 'I am being killed! I'm being killed!'

Jumping off my horse, I scrambled through a weak place in the fence, and then I became aware of what had actually taken place. Two bodies—one black, the other spotted—were rolling on the ground in a confused heap; whilst in the background, some sixty or seventy yards away, the rest of the beaters were huddled up in a crowd, and, nigger-like, doing nothing to assist their unfortunate comrade but yell!

For some reason, which I have never yet been able to account for, the panther, on catching sight of me as I ran up, released her victim, and sneaked sullenly away into an adjoining field of 'bájee' (a tall reed that attains a height of six or seven feet). Being young and foolish, I rashly ran after her, and after pushing my way through the dense growth for about fifteen yards, I came up with her where the crop was rather thinner, where she was crouched, glaring and growling and spitting like an angry cat. Running in, I drove my spear through her, pinning her to the ground; and here again my guardian angel interposed, for, seizing the tough bamboo shaft of my spear, on which I was leaning all my weight, in her powerful teeth she must have very soon had me down. Just in the nick of time, however, I heard a rattling in the bájee behind me, and in rushed Muzzle, closely followed by his owner. Straight at his foe went the plucky old dog, seizing her by the throat, but rather low down (how 'Syko' would have enjoyed it! and if he honours me by reading this I am sure he will lick his chops and fancy himself present!), which piece of attention the panther repaid by fastening on to Muzzle's hind quarters. This gave me a moment's breathing time, and Muzzle's owner and some of the rest of the party coming up, we soon polished off the panther.

With great difficulty we managed to choke the game old dog off the dead panther, and dragging her out into the open,

we went to see what damage had been done. We found the wounded man being supported by numerous sympathising friends, who one and all vowed they were his brothers, with a view, evidently, of being excused from further beating, and so obtaining the maximum amount of pay with the minimum amount of exertion. On examining the wounded man we found he had been badly bitten in the shoulder close to the neck, and liberally clawed down his right side, arm, and leg. Presenting him with a *douceur* of fifty rupees (untold wealth to a man in his position), we sent him off to the Station Hospital with a note to the doctor, requesting him to attend to the case; and I trust he is still alive and well, though a good many years have passed since that day.

Old Colonel Pope eventually came up in a tremendous state of excitement and delight, vowing I was 'the best chap out,' and that there never was such a good horse as Téndwâ; and there and then wanted to match him against any horse present, even weights for *any* distance! However, no one seemed inclined to take the old gentleman up, and we all went on to try another beat, leaving the Colonel to look up the cubs, as he was keenly desirous to emulate my performance. We heard afterwards that he succeeded in finding them (they were about the size of a good big tom cat), and getting one jammed up in a corner, was proceeding on foot to spear it, when, unfortunately, a branch knocked off his spectacles, and the cub forthwith seized the opportunity to make himself scarce, and was no more seen. Muzzle was of course the hero of the hour, and after having had his wounds dressed, and being regaled with a whole tin of oxtail soup, curled himself up on his master's bed, and went to sleep (with one eye open!), no doubt to dream and fight his battles o'er again.

As I write the skull of the Ghonee panther grins down at me from the wall of my 'snuggery,' and brings to mind that pleasant day in the Far East, when I enjoyed my last bit of 'Shikar,'

'In the days that we went hog-hunting,
A long time ago.'

What eventually became of Téndwâ I know not; but I feel sure that if he ever got into a good stable, and was well ridden, he turned out a good horse. Most likely, though, his fate, like that of many another good hunter and racehorse, was to drag out a miserable existence between the shafts of a dák-gharry, or some such vehicle.

And now, O reader! what say you about 'Walers?' Here was one so bad under the apparently good treatment he received as a troop horse, and thought so badly of by experienced soldiers and sportsmen, as to be sold for a song *literally*, or rather the price of one; and yet, in the hands of a man who knew nothing of stable management, and unable or afraid to ride him, showing an amount of pluck and endurance he would scarcely have been credited with (for he was heavily handicapped against that good Arab, and giving him over four stone). He had been badly groomed, still worse fed, and indifferently ridden, and yet he ran and *tried like a racehorse*, went up to his game, and so secured the coveted honour of 'first spear' for his rider. (We will draw a veil over his latter performance at a critical moment, please, and be

'To his virtues ever kind,
And to his faults a *leetle* blind!')

And now, kind reader, if you have had the patience to wade thus far through the writing of one whose hand has been more wont to handle the rifle and spear than the pen, knock out the ashes of that *last* pipe, and before you go to roost just drink one little toast in 'Highland Wine,' or 'Mountain Dew,' to

SADDLE, SPUR, and SPEAR.

THE PRINCE OF THE HEAVIES.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE QUORN.

By 'TOM MARKLAND.'



HEN churlish Winter turns head-groom,
And locks the hunting stable,
The men who'd be the first to go,
To go no more are able.
The hounds bay hoarsely in the yards,
And chide each white-robed dawning,
While Clubland chats of days gone by
To keep itself from yawning.

Though many names of widespread fame
May fairly be brought to the fore,
Not one can bear away the palm
From our 'Heavy-weight Prince'—Gilmour.

The Ensign slim, the Guardsman trim,
Full oft his line would follow,
For should they try to take their own
The 'Prince' could beat them hollow.

He knew each hedge, and mead, and ditch,
The Leicester pastures over,
Forestalling Charley's points and tricks
The moment he broke cover.

Though many names, &c.

The 'Old Club' nestles 'neath the shade
Of proud St. Mary's tower,
Upon its courts her grand old elms
Their autumn leaves still shower;
And wending through those cosy halls,
The runs of days departed
Come crowding back: the days when thence
Rode Gilmour the stout-hearted.

Though many names, &c.

His stables harboured well-known steeds—
Huge-boned and framed for jumping,
Who bore him well o'er Dalby Dale
And stood the 'Vale's' stiff pumping.
When Sol's bright coursers gin to flag,
All Melton asks with reason,—
'What chance of Gilmour on "the First"
To start us with the season?'

Though many names, &c.

For his true heart and open hand,
His frank and manly bearing,
Have writ his name on lowliest hearths;
Whilst, too, his peerless daring,
Inscribe it bright, and stamp it clear
In future hunting story,
And songs of riders straight and keen,
Fair Quorndon's pride and glory.

Though many names, &c.

Stout Charley Wells, his henchman true,
Is still as game as ever;
Nigh half a hundred years of time
These two have failed to sever.
A fine old English gentleman,
No hardship finds in gaining,
For field or stable followers true,
Nor of their love retaining.

Though many names of wide-spread fame
May fairly be brought to the fore,
Not one can bear away the palm
From our 'Heavy-weight Prince'—Gilmour.

THE FAREWELL FEAST OF FISTIANA.

By 'AN OUTSIDER.'

IF you are not mad enough to go North and spend your Christmas in a snowed-up railway-train somewhere between Perth and Stonehaven, I shall expect you to dine with me at the "Old Tile" Tavern to-morrow night at seven sharp, when you will meet as choice a lot of spirits as ever you met in your life. I assure you that there will not be a man present who has not either thrashed his neighbour or been thrashed himself, and in some instances twice over. Be sure and come!

This curious invitation was written on the back of a Christmas card bearing the words, 'Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards men.' It was not signed, but the sprawling way in which the pen had cantered over the paper, like an unbroken colt in a ploughed field, let me know, without doubt, it was from my old college friend, Barclay of Aberdeen, better known as 'The Haddock,' from his having a complexion similar to that delicious fish after it has been smoked in the genuine 'Findon' or 'Finnan' fashion over a stick fire. Claiming to have the same blood in his veins as Captain Barclay of Ury, that famous sportsman, the friend and trainer of Tom Cribb, whilom Champion of England; scarcely a day passed of 'The Haddock's' youth without practical attempts being made to prove his descent. Indeed since Dugald Dalgetty, Rittmaster, and Soldier of Fortune, graduated at the old Marischal College, there had been no student known in Aberdeen who was fonder of fighting. To him indeed 'Peace and Goodwill' were words to be used, and only used, after a good fight. It was not therefore without some misgivings that ere the night was over I should no longer prove the exception to the company, as the only unthrashed man, that I wended my way to the 'Old Tile' Tavern, which is situated in a side-street running off the Strand. With reminiscences of college raids still fresh in my memory, I was quite prepared to meet all the bailed-out youths from Bow Street, who had been engaged in lamp-smashing or knocker-pulling, and had fought one another at times, just to while away an idle hour. Never was I more mistaken.

As I hung up my overcoat and muffler in the little ante-room

of the 'Old Tile' (so named from its still having a red-tiled roof), I could not help remarking on the strange appearance, and still stranger language, of several gentlemen who were standing in the corner. I certainly should never have dreamt that they were to be my fellow-guests of the evening, had not 'The Haddock' at that moment made his appearance, and after shaking hands with me in his usual vigorous pump-handle fashion, introduced me to each of them with a running fire of explanatory remarks, such as, 'Bob Jarvis—must have heard of Bob, fought Ben Caunt, and licked him in the twenty-fourth round; Tom Clifton, "The Slasher." Glad to see you looking so well, Tom, old man. There's no better man with his right than Tom in England.' Though they seemed to hang their heads with bashfulness at the compliments which were paid them, they stepped forward and extended their right hands readily, but somehow as if they wished to let their left hands know what they were doing. It was the force of an old habit which asserted itself, however, yet I kept on guard, wishing all the time that I was safely snowed-up to the engine axles, anywhere between London and John o' Groat's House. They were 'all "ighly delighted," however, to make the acquaintance of any friend of the Guv'nor's.

'You see,' said 'The Haddock,' taking me aside, 'most people have their family parties at Christmas, and don't like strangers like you and me amongst them; so I thought, seeing the grand old prize-ring is on its last legs, I would invite all the veterans to dine with me, and bring it to a happy and respectable termination. So the landlord here has contracted to do the whole thing, dinner, drinks, dress-suits, and clean shirt-hires, and takes all responsibility, for two pounds a-head. It will not come to so much after all; and what a night we'll have of it, old boy, eh? But the soup is on the table.'

I was soon comfortably seated between the 'Chester Chicken' and the 'Putney Pet,' and my *vis-à-vis*, I was informed by our host and chairman, was none other than the renowned 'Bristol Bruiser' himself. Names and surnames were not given, and to have asked for such would no doubt have proved dangerous. I silently confined my attentions to the soup, gathering a little nerve over the fish, and found confidence enough to try a little chat over the roast beef. The language, however, proved a terrible difficulty. The 'Chester Chicken' refused to have any roast beef, and on my stating my remedies for dyspepsia, he merely smiled and said 'it were rather a bit beyond them things.'

'You see,' he continued with a smile, 'I hain't been able to chew a single bit since I fought "Bruiser" there. Yes, Ben,' he said to my friend across the table, 'that there kupper cut settled me so far as fork-and-knife work goes.' Being, and no doubt appearing, still in doubt, the 'Putney Pet' explained to me that the 'Chicken' had not a single tooth in his head, and that an upper cut was a tremendous blow under the chin, one which 'knocked the floor o' the' mouth right through the roof, and shook the whole upper story.' He laid down his fork and knife and illustrated this deadly stroke, remarking at the same time that 'he was surprised that any friend o' the guv'nor's did not possess this indispensable accomplishment. Whether it was from the effects of training or from hard blows on the 'bread basket,' as the 'Pet' suggested, I do not know, but there were many, like the latter, who fought shy of the roast. After the dessert, pipes and tobacco were brought in, also a plentiful supply of the 'cratur,' and all commenced to re-fight their old battles. The loyal toasts were given with great enthusiasm from the chair, as was also the 'Army,' coupled with the health of the 'Woolwich Infant,' so called because he had once been in the Artillery. 'The Infant' replied with allusions to Rooshar and France, and with that peculiar twist and wriggle common to 'the fancy,' caught the army of the one up on his left eye-brow and chucked it over his shoulder, then threw the other in a similar way over the right shoulder to keep it company. 'It ain't size as wins battles,' he said, 'it's training, condition, and gameness, and the British Army will handle itself well, my boys, and come up to its punishment smiling if need be, which as I knows it won't.' All was happiness thereafter, and it was interesting to notice how lovingly each man had explained to him the cuts and gashes on his face by the actual administrator of the blows. Only one difference arose, and that was between a struck man, 'Islington Bill,' and the striker, 'Clerkenwell Joe,' the former declaring that his nose had been broken by the latter's right, whilst the latter insisted that it was by his left hand. It was finally agreed to settle the dispute by referring it to one of the seconds in the fight who was not present. A song or two, including one from our host, 'Ye Pugilists of England,' followed by the toasts of 'The Manly Art of Self-Defence,' with enthusiasm, and the 'Immortal Memory of Tom Sayers' in solemn silence, brought an ever-memorable night to a close, and donning my top-coat I escaped into the darkness, congratulating myself in getting away so easily from such a queer Christmas party.

MY COUSIN ADA.

By C. H. HAMILTON.

CHAPTER I.

6th February, 18—.

Y DEAR JACK,

‘As you are coming down next Thursday, I send this to let you know that we expect your Cousin Ada and her mother, or rather step-mother, the same day ; so that it would be as well if you were to meet them at Paddington and escort them down by the 2.15 train. And let me tell you, further, that you might do worse than be civil to your cousin, for I know that your Uncle William (who, by the way, is not coming till Friday), intends to settle a very pretty penny on her when she marries. Don’t miss the train.

‘Your affectionate father,

‘JOHN SOBERSIDES.’

Such was the epistle I received a few days after landing at Portsmouth with my regiment, after a sojourn of nearly ten years in the ‘shiny East.’

The writer was, as he had styled himself, ‘an affectionate father,’ but at the same time he was uncommonly fond of having his own way in all matters, and intolerant of those who did not fall in with his views and wishes. He was also Rector of Long Somerton, in the county of Westhampton, where a good living, added to a moderate private fortune, had enabled him to bring up a family of four without denying himself the good things of this life ; of which, for a parson, he was quite sufficiently fond. Although advancing years, increasing weight, and a touch of the gout, had made him less active in the saddle than formerly, he still kept a good stable of hunters, and I was looking forward with glee to riding some of them during the next few weeks in our sporting county.

As regards the injunctions contained in my father’s letter I felt a little disposed to be rebellious. Of course I should be civil — nay, I hoped affectionate — to my cousin, whom I remembered a bright child of ten, at the time I, a raw ensign of eighteen, embarked for India ; but I had no idea of making up

to her for her money, and I felt virtuously indignant with my parent for what I regarded as his unclerical worldliness.

Ada was the only daughter of my father's younger brother, who had turned his own modest fortune to good account on the Stock Exchange, and was now very well to do. He had been a widower for some years, but had lately married, *en secondes noces*, a cousin of his first wife—a pretty girl, so I understood, of little more than his daughter's age.

At two o'clock on the appointed Thursday I stood on the platform of Paddington Station, with my rugs and luggage, awaiting my fair relatives. They did not keep me long in suspense, but presently drove up in a well-horsed brougham, the crest on the panel of which sufficed to show me it was my uncle's, had I had any doubt of the identity of the occupants. The latter, who were alike as two sisters, seemed glad to meet me, and we fraternised quickly enough without formal introduction or explanation. Their maid having arrived with the luggage in a cab, we were soon in the train and on our way westward. I sat with my back to the engine, and facing the shorter and rather darker of my companions, whom, from her livelier and less pensive manner, I judged to be my cousin.

I am, to my great regret, apt to be rather shy in the company of women on first acquaintance. I can get on with them well enough if they will but meet me half way, but it depends entirely on them. On the present occasion there was no fear of my lapsing into the stupid taciturnity which has so often vexed me, and no doubt amused those I have been introduced to, when the latter, either from stuckupedness or sheer mischief, have declined to give me that lead in conversation which I required. My fair *vis-à-vis* proved full of amiability and inquiry.

'So,' she at length remarked, after we had discussed the weather, &c., 'you are returning at last to the bosom of your beloved family. How glad they will be to see you again! I wonder if they'll think you much changed?'

'I suppose I am a good deal changed after all these years: what do *you* think?'

'I,' she said, 'of all people in the world! What opinion can I give?'

'Well,' I rejoined, rather piqued at her not recollecting me, 'you *might*. I remember *you* very well, and, what's more, how fond you were of toffee.'

'Ah! of course!' with a reassured look; 'how stupid of me

to forget! and how ungrateful, too! for I'm sure you were always kind in ministering to my weakness. But we have changed all that now, and given up sweets: they are bad for our teeth.'

And as she smiled she showed a pearly set that were, to all appearances, quite unimpaired by youthful indiscretion.

'Now tell me,' she went on, 'about your life in India, and all the wonderful sights you have seen there. Of course I've read all about pagodas, and idols, and Juggernaut's car, and tigers, and white ants; but it's so much more interesting to meet face to face some one who has been living in the midst of them all. Doesn't poor Old England seem terribly prosaic after the gorgeous East?'

'No, indeed! The gorgeous East, as you call it, is much overrated; at all events in my humble opinion. What is magnificent at a distance often proves tawdry and squalid on closer approach. There is a want of completeness about Indian finery.'

'And the ladies—the bright-eyed houris—what of them?'

'Bright-eyed she-apes!—I beg your pardon; but really, it is so funny to hear the ideas some people have of things Indian—from reading *Lalla Rookh*, I suppose. Of course I have seen nothing of the denizens of the great zenanas; but, judging from the common or garden nautch-girl, whom I have seen dancing, there is not much about them to boast of: their figures and movements certainly are graceful, but their arms are like pipe-stems, and their faces soulless and devoid of expression.'

'Ah! there's no pleasing some people, I fear, when the freshness of life is dried up within them, and they are *blasés* prematurely. I am disappointed in you already.' And the long dark lashes dropped over her saucy violet eyes.

'What a little flirt!' I said to myself; but I answered, lowering my voice and bending forward, 'Don't be disappointed before you've given a fellow a chance. I *can* be pleased, and am so now—more than I dare express—to find myself in such delightful company!'

'Really, Jack!—I may call you Jack, mayn't I?'

'Indeed you may. And, I presume, I may address you as Ada, without the formal prefix of Cousin?'

'Without the prefix of Cousin? Certainly; it will be quite correct.'

Then she gave me a little look, which I took to imply that,

as we two were not the only occupants of the compartment, we had better shape our conversation accordingly, and addressed herself presently to her companion on some indifferent topic. The latter, whom I had already mentally labelled as my *step-aunt* (with a disagreeable emphasis on the *step*), had for some little time been apparently immersed in the perusal of an evening paper, though I had not failed to note that, when our dialogue had assumed a subdued and rather tender tone, a little contemptuous smile had curled the corners of a handsome mouth and elevated the tip of a *retroussé* nose.

The conversation having now taken a general turn I joined in perforce, but found it dull after the foregoing *tête-à-tête* : so I was not sorry when a lull gave me an opportunity of gazing through the window and picking out the places in the fences intersecting the grassy vale through which we sped, as I should have them if riding to hounds and mounted, as I like to be. And then my thoughts wandered, and I think my eyes closed (for I had risen betimes to catch an early train from Portsmouth), and I got dreaming of my present companions, and how my cousin was a fairy that kept ever beckoning me on and evading me like a will-o'-the-wisp, and how her frumpish but handsome step-mother was warning me all the time with up-raised finger, when my foot seemed to strike against something and — I awoke, and found that we had arrived at our destination, and I had inflicted a slight contusion on my *vis-à-vis's* foot. As I was handing her out of the carriage she whispered,—

‘ Rather more gently, please, next time ! ’

Was it a challenge, or simply mere *badinage* ? How was I, an unsophisticated Captain of Foot of less than thirty years of age, to solve the mystery ? I can only say that as we sat in the waggonette that conveyed us to Somerton I found there was *no* opportunity of renewing the attack, whether gently or vigorously ; so concluded that my cousin was a fascinating coquette, who had got me in the toils—for there I was, fast enough—and would keep me there as long as she pleased. But whether she would make me a help-meet for life, as my father had suggested, was quite another pair of shoes ; for it occurred to me that she would be a rum one to keep pace with, money-bags and all, if we were to attempt to run in double harness for life.

I pass over the effusive greetings of my mother and sisters. They would have been delightful, no doubt, had I returned quite

alone ; but in the presence of my travelling companions, and in my present state of preoccupation, I regret to say that they somewhat palled. Whatever emotion my father may have felt on welcoming home his first-born he kept to himself, but when the ladies had retired to dress for dinner he said,—

‘I am going to mount you to-morrow on my new purchase, Pioneer ; he bears a high character from his late owner, and if you have not lost your nerve you will be well carried. I wish you to pilot your cousin Ada, who, though a fine horsewoman, may have some little trouble at first with Isabelle, who is a brilliant huntress when she settles down, but rather skittish and tricky when over-fresh, as she is likely to be to-morrow. Now go and dress for dinner.’

I pride myself on being a dutiful son, and especially so when the paths of duty and inclination lie together ; so I lingered not over my toilet, but full of happy thoughts, alternating between the satisfaction of ‘taking the change’ out of Pioneer, and the pleasure of escorting Ada over the cream of our county, I made the best of my way to the drawing-room ; and as soon as dinner was announced offered my arm to my new enslaver and took her straight in to dinner, in spite of the frowns of my father, who would have anticipated me, but was fain to content himself with the more staid charms of my other fellow-traveller. Certainly, mother and daughter, if I might so style two almost coeval cousins, seemed quite to have reversed the usual order of things dressy, for my partner was so *décolletée* as to leave me no doubt regarding the symmetrical development of her plump but graceful figure, while my father’s was attired in a plain high gown.

Happy as I was, and in love as I deemed myself, I was not so far gone as to lose my appetite, so did ample justice to my father’s excellent fare, without sparing his dry champagne. Growing bolder with each course and each libation, I exerted myself to my utmost to do the agreeable to my neighbour and felt—so far—repaid by her smiles and, I may add, occasional blushes. But, *couleur de rose* as all was at present, I did not forget the morrow ; so, being at last at a loss for a fresh compliment, I changed the subject and asked,—

‘Aren’t you looking forward to to-morrow, and the ride we are to have together?’

‘Ride ! I fear I am but a poor rider, and shall content myself with surveying the chase from wheels.’

‘Oh! I say, this will never do, when my father has particularly informed me that you are to ride the redoubtable Isabelle! You are not going to back out of it because you hear she is short of work, I hope!’

‘Well, if *you* think it will be safe, I don’t mind venturing; but you’ll take *particular* care of me—won’t you, Jack?’

‘Care of you? I’d give my life to save you from a finger-ache!’

‘Do be careful, and don’t look quite so—friendly! I observe your father gazing at us with more than disapprobation!’

‘Let him gaze! He doesn’t know his own mind, I think! Can you keep a secret? Well, then, he thinks you and I are made for each other. I’m sure I quite agree with him. But what will *your* father say?’

‘You certainly don’t waste time, Jack, in putting rather an important question; but, setting aside my own inclinations, which you seem to take for granted, I am quite certain that *my* father will never give his consent to you and me being more to each other than we are now. I may tell you, in fact, that he has already disposed of my hand, and is hardly the man to withdraw from a solemn engagement!’

Staggered by this sudden blow, I was trying to articulate some further remark when my mother gave the signal for the ladies to withdraw, and I was left to the society of my father and his curate, an irreproachable youth, who seemed to be very thick with my sister Jane, next to whom he had contrived to sit at dinner, although he had taken in my mother. I longed for an explanation with my father, but it was impossible at present; so before many minutes had elapsed, as none of us seemed congenially or convivially disposed, we adjourned to the drawing-room. Here I tried to get some further explanatory conversation out of my late companion, but my elder sister, Susan, who was always a marplot, contrived to interrupt the *tête-à-tête*, and carry us off to play a round game at cards, which is my pet aversion. Still worse, she seated herself between us, and no manœuvring of mine could mend matters, which failed to take a turn for the better during the evening. I received playful, bantering remarks, more than one stolen glance full of meaning, and a distinct pressure of the hand on saying ‘Good night’ from my charmer, but nothing more satisfactory; and it soon became patent that the enlightening on the subject now nearest to my heart was not to come from her.

However, I was not to be kept long waiting, for no sooner was I left alone with the author of my being than he turned round fiercely on me with,—

‘Well, sir, you’re a dutiful son, I must say, and a nice person to introduce into a respectable family! Will you be good enough to explain what you mean by your outrageous conduct this evening?’

‘I have merely been carrying out the wish expressed in your letter,—that I should make myself agreeable to my cousin; and I cannot but flatter myself that I have in some measure succeeded.’

‘Your cousin? You infernal puppy!’ (the Rector’s language was not always strictly clerical) ‘why, you’ve been flirting most shamefully the whole evening with your *aunt*!’

CHAPTER II.

MY feelings as I retired to rest may be more easily imagined than described. Suffice it to say that, as I reviewed the day’s doings, it was quite plain to me that I had made a thundering idiot of myself. Why had I never taken the trouble to ascertain *which was which* of the two Adas (for the general conversation had shown me that both cousins rejoiced in the same proper name)? And why had I fallen so readily into a plot which had been started, at any rate, by my own false conclusion?

I must do myself the justice to state that I became completely cured of my amorous caprice from the moment I was aware that its object was my uncle’s lawful wife! So that the pangs of misplaced affection were not added to my other regrets. But now that the true state of the case was apparent to me, I could not help reflecting on what *might* have been but for my fatal mistake. The other Ada, my real cousin, how would she have suited as a wife had I felt disposed, on further acquaintance, to carry out my father’s suggestion? Personally, she could certainly hold her own in contrast with my late flame; she was taller, and her beauty, notwithstanding their likeness, of a higher type. If not so amusing she had ‘better form,’ and when she looked you in the face there was, as I now remembered, an expression of fearless candour in her grey eyes, which was worth all the brightness and vivacity of her step-mother over and over again to any one contemplating a union for life. How I wished I had steered clear of that idiotic flirtation, and waited to see what

was good for me! But, of course, it was too late now. My chance, if ever I had had one, was lost for ever. How could a pure, high-minded girl, regard otherwise than as a superficial coxcomb one who had on first acquaintance, under her very eyes, made undisguised love to her step-mother?

Fortunately my slumbers were not disturbed by my troubles, these last being counteracted by a good digestion. What dreams I had were of a hopeful nature, and I awoke refreshed physically, but my mental condition as depressed as before.

'Mrs. William Sobersides' maid, sir, said as I was to give you this the first thing in the morning,' said the butler, who put a note into my hand when he called me. It ran as follows:—

'Long before you read this, my dear Jack, you will doubtless have become aware of the real state of affairs. Don't be too angry with me for keeping up the illusion. I really could not help it. You were so deliciously in earnest, and ready to be taken in, that I felt bound to give you a lesson, which I hope you will take to heart for future guidance. And don't distress yourself, either, on the score of your uncle. He will be *immensely* amused when I tell him all. What you mentioned about your father's wishes has set me thinking. If you should be in earnest in that matter I will be your friend. But I should recommend prudence. The real cousin is a sensitive, high-spirited girl, and not to be so easily won as was your affectionate aunt,

'ADA SOBERSIDES.'

'P.S.—It was good fun while it lasted, was it not?'

The perusal of the above characteristic epistle cheered me a bit, and gave me at least courage to face the family circle at breakfast; but I was not altogether sorry to find that the now unaccustomed donning of orthodox hunting things caused me to make my appearance at that meal when nearly all the others had finished, and were preparing for a start. My cousin Ada, looking charming in her habit, gave me my coffee with a reassuring smile, and informed me that our horses would be at the door in a quarter of an hour. The Curate was to chaperone Mrs. William and my sisters in the waggonette, while the Rector waited for my uncle, whose early train from town was already overdue.

Having at length put up my cousin on Isabelle, a well-bred, clever-looking, but nervous and irritable animal, that lashed out at me as I came near her, I joined her at once on Pioneer, a perfect-mannered nag, whose head and eye betrayed gameness and docility, whilst his muscular, symmetrical frame, promised

well for his capability of performing all a hunter should be asked to do. Then we jogged on to the meet, some five miles distant, saving a big bend in the road by a line of bridle-gates which I well knew. Fortunately my mount was perfect at opening these, or we should have had trouble with the mare; and by the time we arrived at the meet I had ample leisure to admire the patience and dexterity which Ada displayed in handling her fretful steed.

It was a perfect morning. Steady rain had fallen during the night but had passed away, leaving a clear but not too bright sky, the fleecy clouds being just stirred by a light south-easterly breeze. The Netherdrot hounds looked level and blooming, and the hunt horses, under their comparatively light burdens, were enough to make a fourteen-stone man break the Tenth Commandment

We found almost at once in a big wood, from which Ada and I got away indifferently as the hounds were streaming away a field and a half ahead. Our course was plain enough: down a grassy incline, the gate at the bottom of which was blocked by the best part of the numerous field, who were crowding, cramming, and getting in each other's way. To join them was to lose what little start we had; and the fence was an ugly one to jump—a high, thick bullfinch, having at the only spot where daylight was visible a strong rail through it, and evidently a wide ditch with a drop beyond. Alone on a horse like Pioneer I should not have hesitated, but I looked at my cousin for orders. She gave me a nod, which meant 'Straight on,' and I set Pioneer's head for the place. He just cocked his ears and shortened his stride while he quickened his stroke, and was over in a twinkling. The mare tore wildly behind me, and I turned to see her rap the timber with every leg she had, drop a hind one in the ditch, and nearly came on her nose; but her shoulders and her rider's self-possession saved the fall, and they were soon stretching away at their ease alongside of me.

It was plainer sailing now, for, though crossing a strong grass vale, we had plenty of room to pick and ride for negotiable places, and we were gradually closing on the lucky few constituting the first flight, who had got well away with hounds. The latter presently bent to the right, making a turn in our favour; and as I opened a gate into a road after ten minutes' galloping they crossed it, and were hitting off the scent in a fallow beyond, not a hundred and fifty yards to our left. An

accommodating lane served Ada and myself in breasting the incline that had here to be faced (for we were leaving the vale), and a formidable succession of stone walls loomed before us. When near the summit hounds again bent from us to the left, and we popped over a low wall into the field they were leaving. The going was still capital; indeed, the light sandy plough of these hills after much rain often rides better than the vale itself. I was glad of a good take-off, for the next wall was a big one—nearly five-feet high. Pioneer, however, showed^d that such an obstacle was no novelty to him; for, breaking into a collected canter as he neared it, he pulled up when right under it, and, steadying himself for half a second, bucked clean over almost without an effort. The mare, on the contrary, injudiciously pressed by Ada, came on at top speed, and swerved round to the left at the last moment.

‘Too fast, Ada!’ I cried; ‘you came too fast! Take her back twenty yards and *trot* her at it. She’ll jump right enough then!’

The brave girl obeyed to the very letter; and this time Isabelle, having free scope for her powers, rose magnificently, whilst Ada, sitting well back as they landed, completed as perfect a picture of feminine equestrianism as the eye of man could behold.

The refusal had lost us some ground, and the hounds were racing a quarter of a mile ahead of us; but on these grand, undulating downs, there is nothing to hide them from view for more than a second or two, and if you only keep on riding (and jumping) you cannot lose them. So to ride and jump we were compelled, for the pack turned neither to the right nor left, but kept ever rolling along like white marbles before us, with a faint occasional cry just to show they were not mute. At length we lose sight of them for a brief space, for we have crossed the ridge of hills, and are heading now for a fresh strip of vale, and in the far distance I can see the dreaded Edenlove Brook gleaming in the wintry sun. A glance at my watch tells me we have been going for seven-and-twenty minutes without a check, though I begin to wish for such a contingency; but both the nags are still going stoutly, and the downward incline, where I am careful *not* to increase the pace, is in their favour. Only two riders, the huntsman and first whip, are now in front of us; the rest of the field have been choked off by the pace. A low wall at the foot of the hill leads over an ugly drop; but the



Too fast Ada Joried
take her back & beat her
at it

landing is on the grass-siding of a road, out of which we jump over a good-sized stile, which neither horse touches to speak of—a reassuring sign.

For the next few fields, all grass, the pace is not quite so good as it has been. It *will* tell on hounds as well as horses, and I, for one, do not blame the former at this juncture, if, whether for the above reason or from the pastures being stained by cattle, they give us time to watch them hunt, open a gate or two, and take a pull at our horses. Anyhow, our fox is a straight-necked one, and has gone right on for the water, if not through it. Indeed, as we crush through the fence bordering the big ridge and furrow-field through which the brook runs, an electric something seems to shoot through the pack, and they glide away from us again with vengeance in their tongues, while I think I see a brown, draggled object, emerge from the far bank, and find breath for a shrill scream myself. Fortunately the furrows lie the right way, and I pick a sound ridge, at the end of which a stunted bush marks the take-off. Ada has taken the office, and is lying some fifteen lengths behind me; so, when about sixty yards from the water, I catch hold of Pioneer and send him along. Only in imagination, however, for not a jot does he hurry himself; and I begin to fear that, good hunter as he is in other respects, the horse is no water-jumper, and resign myself in despair to the prospect of a cold bath or ignominious refusal, with a corresponding result for my cousin. Twenty, thirty yards, and more, we gallop doggedly on, when of a sudden, as the water meets his eye, the good horse pricks his ears and, gradually increasing his pace of his own accord, just gets into his full stride on the brink and clears sixteen feet of water like the proverbial swallow on a summer's eve. As I turn in the saddle I see Isabelle jump with equal boldness but less success; for the landing, loosened by Pioneer's hind legs, gives way completely under hers, and she and her fair rider roll over, fortunately clear of each other and of the water. Both are up in a second or two, and Ada mounted with my assistance in a few more; but there is no occasion for hurry, for there is a confused scramble and worry in the next ditch, where our gallant but exhausted fox had taken refuge at last. Stephen the huntsman, having got over with a scramble somewhat to our right, is with them; while Jack the whip, who had galloped round to a ford he knew of, is coming fast to his assistance. The brush is handed to Ada, and cost *me* a sovereign, which I grudged less

than any I ever expended, and homeward we wend our way, too pleased with ourselves and our good fortune to care to talk over this brilliant thing with less favoured fellow-sportsmen. But when at last I rode up on the off-side of my cousin I was aware of a crimson stream, half dried, extending down her cheek.

‘I never felt it,’ she said, ‘till now. It must have happened at that thick bullfinch. What a fright I must look!’

‘Hardly that,’ I replied, trying to conceal my admiration; ‘but if you will allow me, I’ll take advantage of the water’ (we were riding along the margin of the brook) ‘and bathe your face.’

As the girl bent her neck for the process it was tinged with a rosy hue, due, I thought, to some more delicate influence than exercise; and as she thanked me on the completion of the task I observed a corresponding signal hung out below the grey eyes, flashing themselves, but certainly not with displeasure. I felt my own pulse beating with far deeper emotion than my late flirtation had aroused: but, warned by the experiences of that now ‘regrettable incident,’ I controlled my feelings as best I could, and waited for what time should bring forth.

I was right. We enjoyed other gallops together before the end of the season; none, perhaps, quite so brilliant as the first; but from each I rode home a happier man. For every day I was being more penetrated with the true worth of a brave and gentle nature, more lasting, and therefore more heart-enthraling, even than the fair form which held it.

Will you be surprised to hear that before the summer was over I stood at the altar with my cousin Ada?



Finchellam

One way of starting them

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

UNDER THE STARTER. A SKETCH AT SANDOWN PARK.

By 'A TURFITE.'

 HERE are thousands of frequenters of race-meetings, who, all absorbed with the idea of seeing an exciting struggle at the finish, never think of walking down to the starting-post and witnessing the commencement of the contest. The feverish gambler will hang round the heels of the howling book-maker to the last moment, in the hope of securing the latest advantages in wagering; and the *dilettante* young man, who has risked a 'box of gloves, which he would' like to lose to the fair young lady on the drag, betakes himself to the stand as soon as the horses leave the paddock, content to look at them from afar through his binocular glass while they are 'under the starter.' Of course, folks say anybody can start horses, just as there are men who imagine that driving a gig and editing a newspaper are two of the easiest things in life. A chat with Lord Marcus Beresford, or Custance, or a few afternoons spent in witnessing the numerous attempts made to let off, on even terms, a dozen or more horses for a six-furlong race, would soon disabuse their minds of all such erroneous opinions. Occasionally a steward, waxing wroth at delay, has left the stand for the post, and, seizing the flag, sent off the horses at once; but the result has never given the most intense satisfaction. Lord Rosebery, on his native heath at Edinburgh, once essayed the performance of the duties, and succeeded in leaving his own horse, the horse of the public, so far as wagering is concerned, behind everything, making poor Constable, his jockey, to observe ironically on returning to the paddock,—'If I ride for his lordship, and his lordship starts 'em, we'll get on, we will.'

The advantages of a good start for anything in this world are proverbial. The young man who begins with a thousand, all things being favourable, will most likely end with a million, and the lame beggar setting out a mile behind his companion may lag all day with an empty wallet. A ship that gets off ahead of her opponent catches the first of every breeze that blows, as yacht-racing men well know, and the advantages of a clear lead and a weather berth have often been demonstrated at Cowes. Greyhounds at Altcar are slipped evenly so far as the withdrawing of the collar-belt is concerned, but frequently they do not start fairly, through unevenness of the ground; and one may gain the first turn, which in many cases is more than half the battle. When the clerk of the scales has weighed out every jockey according to the pre-determination of the handicapper, to whom he but acts as recorder, the full responsibility of everything for the trainer's bill, the stakes, the owners' bets, and the public money, as the sovereigns, half-crowns, and sixpences of the people, whom Carlyle says are mostly fools (an opinion which horse-racing endorses), is focused in the starter. The advantages of a clear lead at the beginning, more especially when the distance to be traversed is very short, is undoubted; and in many cases the lowering of the starter's banner means the raising of the banner of victory for the animal which gets first away.

It will readily be understood that the official should in all cases be a most honest and trustworthy man; he should be above the temptations of wagering, be blind to the shades of all silken jackets, so far as prejudice goes, and be deaf to the loudest shouts of the leather-lunged betting-man who in the ring may proclaim the favourite. He must treat all jockeys fairly—the man with 10,000*l.* a-year who has won Derbies and St. Legers, and the young feather-weight fledgling who has yet to have his heart warmed with the ringing cheers of success.

What is required indeed of the starter is that he shall start fairly, or as fairly as he can. 'All you have got to do,' said the Yorkshire clerk of the course to the huntsman who held the banner at a local gathering, 'is to see as they all get away fair and square and together, when Squire's ahead;' but there must be no 'Squires ahead' at well-conducted meetings. Young lads full of playfulness will frequently break away out of sheer wanton mischief, and old and experienced riders will encourage them to do so, taking care never to join very heartily in the game. When the flag does fall the latter will be off in front,

and secure victories they knew would be impossible but for the number of false starts which they had purposely helped to make.

A starter also, it is essential, should make himself respected, so that his words may be law unto all; if not, his temper will be sorely tried. Old 'Bill' Elliot, who in his later days acted as a gatekeeper at meetings, was possibly one of the most eccentric who ever held aloft what a sailor would call the 'Blue-peter' of racing. Possessed of a strong voice, he would order one and all to come back behind him; and on refusing would take out a bit of paper and on the flagstaff mark down their names, in order to report them to the Stewards. He very rarely reported them, however, so that this was looked upon as a *ruse*; for frequently, when busy with the pencil, he would drop the flag and cry 'Go!' At another time he would, in apparent dudgeon, get out his pipe, fill it coolly and calmly, apply first one lucifer match, then another, keeping the flag displayed all the time, watching the jockeys (who, of course, were watching him), drop it suddenly just when inhaling his first whiff to a capital start. Sometimes he would get out a newspaper and read, and on one occasion, when fairly beat, he laid himself down on a grassy bank on the side of the course with all the airs of a tired-out and much-injured man, complaining bitterly of his treatment by the lads, who made various protests, such as 'My mare really won't come back, Mr. Elliot,' for not getting into a close array.

Putting a newspaper, into which he had made several holes with his fingers, over his face, away from the turmoil of the betting-ring, he lay down to sleep, asking bystanders to wake him up in half an hour. While the crowd in the stand afar off waited impatiently, he snored loudly; but no more wakeful weasel ever slept, and the flag, which had been always cocked aloft, fell in the middle of his dreams to as good a start as he said he had ever sent up for judgment.

But while we are ruminating over old racing memories in the drizzling Scotch mist, which in the land of heather would, as Sir John Millais says, bring out beauties of colour like a wet pebble, but serves to obscure it at Sandown under waterproof and umbrella, the crowd is gathering down to the starting-post to witness the commencement of the struggle for the greatest stake that ever was contested for on the British turf.

Lord Marcus Beresford has them soon arranged in line—all

but Whitefriars, which has evidently been named on the same principle that North Sea fishermen call a devil fish 'The Monk.' His favourite mode of galloping seems to be with the fore feet on the ground, and no horse ever exhibited to greater perfection than he does the beauties of this peculiar style. His Lordship, possibly the last man, one would think, from his expression of countenance, who would start them from under a newspaper like old Elliot, walks steadily backward, and the horses follow him slowly—all but Whitefriars; each jockey—from Watts on Miss Jummy and Cannon on Bendigo, to Webb on St. Gatien in the middle, and Archer on Candlemas third from the inside—watching him keenly, and all ready for the spring off.

Whitefriars still remaining obstinate, Lord Marcus repeats what a bystander calls the 'Salvation Army business;' but in vain. At his request a carriage-whip is tried on the tender flanks of the rebellious Whitefriars, but it has only the effect of making the horse more wild, and he canters across the course, seemingly very anxious to try the effect of his heels against something, scattering the crowd which had got inside the rails, and giving a well-deserved scare to the bonnet-man of some sharps, who had lent his back as a card-table, and looked up from his leap-frog attitude rather astonished to see the heels of a horse above his head. Careening over like a ship in a squall, the ill-tempered brute soon clears the track, Archer kindly crying out, in warning to the mounted orderly, 'Look out, policeman! that horse will smash you.' Smash the policeman he certainly would if he were allowed his way, but Barrett succeeds in getting him clear. They close up again, but again he whips round. 'Walk up to them, Archer, please,' is called as the lot close up again; and then, as Candlemas gets up to the quarters of the others the flag is lowered, and they are off—off to a capital start, say the onlookers, as they rush away to the winning-post to see the finish of the contest.

It is impossible to think, after watching numerous starts, but what some improvement could be effected on the present system. The jockeys—watching every movement of the official, wishing to divine his intentions and anticipate the actual moment when he will lower his flag—are in many cases the causes of so many futile attempts to get away. Were the starter placed close behind them, so as to be totally out of their view, and give his orders from his position in rear, it would be much better if by electricity, or other means, he could cause the

sudden disappearance of a flag, answering to the present advance flag, at the proper moment, and to which all jockeys should be called to direct their eyes. By some such mechanical means starts could be made much fairer than at present, false starts would become unknown, and, what every race-goer desiderates, a programme carried out to a minute would be the result.

OLD OXFORD DAYS.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SUMMER TERM.

By 'PECKWATER.'



OW few of us have ever realised that our University career was a term to be reckoned by months, weeks, and days. We came up for years, but as a great portion of the time was spent in vacations, our actual Oxford life was narrowed to limits we did not then estimate, and before we could settle down to the stern realities of the position the end had arrived—we had run our course, and must make way for a succeeding generation. How sad and melancholy we feel when revisiting the scene some years later! The old familiar buildings, streets and lanes, seem to recognise us, but there is no well-known form or cheery voice to give us welcome—all our sins and shortcomings rise in judgment, accentuated by the bitter experience which has succeeded our time of thoughtless extravagance.

If we could only 'star' and purchase one more chance of living those days over again, how different would be our game? Not a bit of it! Under similar conditions human dispositions would show themselves to be the same; intentions and professions might be more pronounced, and that would be all.

Those glorious summer days! Would more time be spent in trying to grind up our moderate faculties to some respectable pitch of scholarship, and less on the river, the cricket-field, or on Port Meadow or Bullingdon? We fear not. With some men there is a time for all things—they can read as long as they need to do, and see all the fun as well; but how very few are these. You say to yourself in summer, 'There is really no excuse for idleness.' You have had your hunting, your drag-riding and steeplechasing, now buckle to and make up for lost time; and we mean to set to work in earnest in the long vacation

with that reading-party which has just been got together, and the 'coach' engaged. Vain illusions! Then the time for the final examination comes desperately close. We can fight off no longer. A spasmodic effort to recover what we had forgotten perhaps since our schooldays, and an inglorious pass, is all we have to show for time and money squandered. This moralising is all very well for those who have already eaten their cake; let us now revert to the choice spirits who are still in full enjoyment of the pleasures of life. Look at that crowd on Port Meadow! every hack in Oxford must be here! Yes, there's an afternoon's flat-racing going on, several matches and sweepstakes are to be run off, and the excitement is intense. A race has just resulted in a dead heat between three, and the riders have agreed to double their stakes and run the heat off later on.

'What on earth did you want to make running for with that speedy jade of yours?' asks Ned Fortescue, one of the best riders of the day, of a friend who has been beaten in a sweepstakes he ought to have won easily.

'Oh! bother waiting and coming with a rush as you do! I always do it at the wrong time. Besides, I like to take the lead and——'

'Keep it if you can,' laughed Fortescue. 'Now, let me ride your mare in the consolation scramble, and you can back her for what you like. I am sure I can win on her.'

To win a few pounds suited Jack Elliott better than finishing nowhere in the race, so he readily assented, and backed his mare in every possible quarter. As Fortescue foretold, his tactics suited the mare's turn of speed, and by waiting with her he won easily.

'Bravo, old fellow! six quid to the good! You shall have half, or I'll stand a dinner at the "Mitre."'

'Ah, that's more my form!' said Fortescue, laughing, as he moved away to mount his own horse, Tom Tough, for the final heat of the big race.

His opponents are two horses in training belonging to stable-keepers, and will be ridden by two well-known 'Varsity jocks.

We fancy we hear Mr. Tollitt, as he looks on, repeating what he has tried to impress on Ned Fortescue over and over again. 'That horse I sold you—Tom Tough—is far better than common; because you bought him cheap you hack him about and take no sort of care of him. Look how well he carried you last season! and the way he made a dead heat of it with those two in training shows me he is worth better treatment. Now do,

Mr. Fortescue, lay him by after to-day, summer him well, and let me bring him out for you next season.'

'Oh, all right, Tollitt! you shall have your way; this race shall be the last,' replied Fortescue, good humouredly.

Mr. Tollitt turned away and shook his head, as much as to imply, 'Yes, and this last race through that heavy ground is likely to be just "the last straw to break the camel's back."' "

A fine slashing-looking blood-horse was this, the very model of an old-fashioned steeplechaser. Sadly knocked about he had been, and one foreleg was decidedly dicky, and required rest after the hard season he had gone through.

As Fortescue rides him down to the start he looks class enough for the Grand National. He is rather lazy and requires rousing up. In the former heat his owner had ridden without spurs; now he has a pair, and his horse knows it. The flat is still wet and heavy-going, but here this stout-bred horse has the advantage, for his rider catches hold of him, rides through it vigorously, cuts the others down, and wins in a canter.

Then a good dinner at the 'Mitre!' one bottle more in honour of the old screw, and an adjournment to College, where sundry games of chance and cunningly-compounded drinks drive all thoughts of bed-time away, until the grey light of morning puts the roysterers to shame. Then they rush out to sniff the cool breeze and gather round 'Mercury,' as the pool in the middle of Tom Quad was called. A wistful glance into the cool basin, an accidental push, or perhaps a bit of horseplay, and one of the number topples off the edge of the stonework into the water. After him dive some half-dozen, and soon the basin is alive with shouting bathers. A tutor rushes out in his dressing-gown, and the alarm is given; off scamper the dripping crew, now thoroughly sobered, and tumble into bed, having, as they hope, not been recognised by the awakened Don.

Next morning Fortescue goes to the stable to see his much-abused screw. His box door is half open, and a consultation is going on within. 'He must be fired,' he hears the Vet. declare, and as the experienced stable-keeper had feared, that last effort through the deep ground had proved too much for this good horse, when out of condition and needing rest.

But we have anticipated.

Mr. Edward Fortescue had left his bed somewhat under compulsion that morning; he had intended to sleep the clock round and make up for loss of bed the night before, but this luxury had been denied him. About nine o'clock three of his boating friends.

had come to his rooms to try and induce him to drive them down to Henley that morning, the first day of the regatta.

One of these was Jack Elliott; bed was no object to him, an hour or two between the sheets, a cold bath, and, after his breakfast, a pint of the old New College strong beer, which he declared was the best pick-me-up going, and he was ready again for any diversion that might be on offer.

They had only made up their minds to go late the night before, and had difficulty in securing a conveyance of any kind. They determined, however, to have a tandem, and at last Mr. Beasley was able to promise them a team, and a pretty turn-out it proved to be. Then who was to be coachman? After long deliberation Jack decided to go to Christchurch, and try and persuade Ned Fortescue to take the ribbons, and his friends, who were all old schoolmates, accompanied him. They were aware Ned was no boating man, but thought that he might be persuaded to take the box seat, for a well-stocked luncheon-basket, lots of drink of the right sort, and the prospect of a rare day's outing, they deemed irresistible.

Jack had been, of course, obliged to leave his friend's rooms at twelve the night before; he knew, however, that to approach the sleeper's bedroom would be a risky operation, for, besides a store of missiles always kept ready, there was that savage old rough terrier to be encountered, who always slept at the foot of his master's bed. Having armed himself with the carpet-broom to keep old 'Trap' at bay, Jack peeped cautiously into the bedroom. A low growl from the dog and an angry mutter from his master proved that the pair were aware of the intrusion.

'I say, Ned, old fellow!' Jack ventured to utter in a persuasive tone, keeping to the door, which he held in such a way as to protect himself.

Bang! came a bootjack just where his head would have been had he not dodged it. The sleeper imagined he was being disturbed by his tutor's scout, with the familiar notice of his having left a slip, announcing as imposition a 'undred lines of 'omer,' which this individual used to delight in shouting as he came close to his sleeping victim, until after several narrow shaves he had had his head cut open by a clever shot with a bootjack.

Finding it dangerous to come to close quarters, the three friends proceeded to harass the foe from the sitting-room. One produced noises on Ned's cornet no sleeper could tolerate, then the dog began barking violently, and at last a voice from within announced a surrender.

'Bring me a bottle of soda-water, and I'll get up,' it was heard to utter in disjointed syllables.

'That I will, my sleeping beauty! and something in the soda to warm up its most ill-used and long-suffering tum-tum,' was the reply from without.

Jack approached his friend with the draught, and a most dissipated, seedy object, the roused sleeper looked.

'Now, drink it off and ask no questions!' and the glass was emptied at one swig.

'What infernal beastliness, Jack! You've played me some trick!' Then in a few moments the effect of the drink was evident. 'Egad! I feel all right; now for my tub!' and the room was cleared for action.

'Whatever was the stuff you dosed me with?' asked Fortescue, as he hurried over his breakfast; 'it's a wonderful pick-me-up, and has put me all right.'

'Well, if you want to know, it was Worcestershire sauce in the soda; the finest stomachic in the world. If I had brought you soda and brandy you would have wanted another nap, and would have been in bed now. Then you will drive us down like a brick, won't you?'

'Of course I will,' was the reply; 'but I suppose you have got some wretched screw team. Why ever did you not speak before? I could have secured Tollitt's best team for the job.'

Fortescue had just time to pay the visit to his old screw as before described, and then hurried off to Beasley's stables, where the rest of the party were waiting.

A comprehensive look at the turn-out convinced the coachman that his day's work was cut out—those groggy forelegs and general look of jadiness were not encouraging.

'And what sort of a leader have you sent on?' he asked.

'Oh! a very nice blood mare; we had her broke to harness, and have had her leader. She is very fresh,' the stableman replied.

It is true, she had been broken to harness, and had kicked a trap into matchwood, and was so decidedly fresh and such a brute they could do nothing with her. Nor would she have been sent out that day only Jack had insisted on having a team of some sort.

About a mile on the road Fortescue caught sight of his leader that was to be; two men were with her, and as soon as the dog-cart pulled up they proceeded to hook her on. It was evidently a risky job to go near her heels. She was a thorough-

bred mare that had broken down in training, and had plenty of go in her if she could but be kept straight. At first she would not tighten her traces at all—the two men ran on each side and kept her going—and then she tried to make a bolt of it, and with a series of vicious kicks broke into a gallop. The difficulty was to make the old wheeler go up to his collar; he had a wholesome dread of his leader's heels, and kept sidling away in a most perplexing and crab-like fashion. However, after going all over the road, with several narrow escapes over heaps of stones and other obstacles, they reached Henley. The wheeler had warmed to his work, but the leader had nearly worn herself out with her kicking and other vagaries, so the coachman was heartily glad when the journey was ended and his scratch team handed over to the care of the stablemen at Henley, with a caution as to their treatment of the animal in the long traces, as she was a rum 'un both in the stable and outside. Henley on a glorious day in June can never be forgotten. The most indifferent 'dry bob' shared the enthusiasm of his boating friends, and listened to the tales of bygone contests over that classic course. In those days the memory of that seven-oared victory, when Oxford with one oarsman disabled was not allowed by Cambridge to substitute an emergency man, and rowed with seven men only *and won*,*

* I find that *Land and Water* gives a full account of the race for the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley in 1843, when the Oxford crew with seven oars beat the Cambridge Subscription-Rooms eight by two lengths, as follows:—

'In their trial heat the Oxford crew, consisting of R. Lowndes, R. Menzies, E. Royds, W. B. Brewster, G. D. Bourne, J. C. Cox, G. E. Hughes, and F. W. Menzies (stroke), A. T. W. Shadwell (cox), had defeated the Oxford Etonians and the Cambridge Black Prince.

'The Cambridge eight consisted of W. H. Yatman, A. H. Shadwell, G. Mann, J. M. Ridley, R. H. Cobbold, W. M. Jones, Hon. L. Denman, C. Vialls (strokes), T. S. Egan (cox). The Oxford stroke fainted on getting into the boat to row "the Rooms" for the final.

'The Cantabs at first refused to allow a substitute, and then gave way, only to have their offer rejected by the Oxonians, who moved their 7 to stroke, and brought down the bow man to No. 7, leaving bow's place vacant.

'The Cantabs were told by the stewards they must row against the seven oars or give up the cup they held, and eventually, after debating whether they too should row with seven oars, started with a full complement.

'The Oxonians had the Bucks station, with a wind off that shore. They held the Cantabs to Remenham Gate, began to go away at Fawley, below Poplar Point were clear, and then crossing over took their opponent's water and won by a clear length, amidst a scene of tremendous excitement.

'The President's chair in the O. U. B. C. barge at Oxford is formed from a portion of the boat in which this celebrated seven-oared crew rowed.'



All over the road, with several narrow-escapes over heaps of stones.

was still fresh in the minds of all. What an old tub this grand old boat would seem now! Then it was regarded as a sacred vessel, and it is to be hoped that rowing-men have not allowed it to be broken up and abused.

‘I don’t believe in a boat-race,’ said dear old C——, the master of our hounds years ago, when we youngsters had enticed him down to the riverside to watch the W—— Regatta. ‘No excitement about it.’ A close race ensued. ‘I’ll go down to the start for the next,’ he said. He did, and ran up the whole way, cheering on his favourite crew with all the ardour of a schoolboy. ‘Never saw better fun in my life; it makes all the difference whether you see the whole thing from start to finish,’ he said, highly delighted. And such was Ned Fortescue’s opinion after running up with the two ‘Varsity crews that met this year in the Grand Challenge Cup. After that they agreed to have a rest and test the contents of the luncheon-basket. Yorkshire pies from a shop in the High whose sign was the ‘Lively Grass-hopper’ were things worth remembering, and of these they found a supply. Some Bass’s ale and half a bottle of sherry apiece gave quite a rosy tint to the beautiful surroundings. Then the soothing weed had almost enticed them to forswear all further exertion and indulge in just forty winks, when they were induced by some energetic enthusiasts to go down to the start for another race, after which it was time for them to make a start homewards.

‘I vote we leave that beast of a leader for one of the cads to lead home,’ said one of the passengers while they were having a parting drink in honour of Oxford.

‘Nonsense!’ said the coachman; ‘if you funk, you shall walk the whole way;’ and they went to the yard where their team stood ready for the start.

‘You vicious brute!’ exclaimed the coachman, as he looked at the leader still wet from her morning’s work, and held by two men.

‘Just help us into the street and clear of the crowd. Here’s a crown for you,’ he added.

‘But where’s Jack Elliott? oh! here he comes!’ and at that moment Jack arrived, looking flushed and excited. He had a cousin rowing in the Cambridge boat, and there had been something very like a shindy between the two crews, owing to one of the Oxford men most unwarrantably declaring that the damaged rowlock in the Cambridge boat had been broken purposely,

when all chance of winning was over. A similar accusation might just as well have been made this year. This, of course, led to no end of recriminations and bad feeling, but only for a short time, for peace was quickly established, and anger smothered in draughts of champagne and claret cup, of which Master Jack managed to get his full share.

‘Now up with you!’ and they leave the inn yard.

The two men ran alongside the leader until the corner into the main street is turned, and their homeward journey is begun. The crowded street presented a fine opportunity for this wilful jade to show off her kicking propensities; but as soon as they were in the straight, off she rushed regardless of foot people or any other obstacle; first on one side, then on the other, her hind shoes were visible; the old wheeler received a rap which made him pursue his morning’s crab-like tactics to keep out of harm’s way, and Fortescue found it impossible to hold him in the leader’s track, whose traces were much longer than usual, with a view, no doubt, to the wheeler’s safety.

With this mode of progress the street was effectually cleared, and with the exception of a slight collision with a spring-cart, which Ned tried in vain to pull clear of, they reached the open road in safety. Here it was comparatively plain sailing, and the coachman had plenty of opportunities of having his revenge. All went well until nearing Nuneham, when Jack Elliott, from the back of the dogcart, suddenly declared that he would drive the rest of the way home—the champagne had evidently taken a wrong turn.

In vain did the rest remonstrate. ‘I have to pay for the team, and I don’t see why I shouldn’t have some of the fun!’ he replied, in an injured tone.

‘Oh, all right! If that’s the line you take, drive by all means,’ said Fortescue, pulling up at the foot of a hill.

They changed seats. Jack gathered up the reins in some sort of fashion; he had no more idea of driving a team than he had of a traction-engine.

Up the hill it was all right, but then began that *facilis descensus* which so many talk about feelingly.

‘Steady off the top of the bank, Jack! catch hold of that leader, will you?’ shouted Ned, standing up on the hind foot-board. ‘Ah! she’s off!’

Jack tried to take a pull, but he was all abroad; then the wheeler made a fearful peck or two, broke into a canter for a

few yards, and after a plucky effort or two to save himself, came down on his head and rolled over. The leader's traces became unfixed, and off she bolted towards Oxford. Ned had let himself down from behind when he saw the crash was inevitable; the other passengers were shot yards away, but beyond bruises and gravel-rash no serious injuries were received. Not so, however, with the driver, who was discovered heels up in a thick thorn-fence, into which he had been sent head first, and from which he was drawn by the united exertions of his three friends, with a broken arm and sundry bumps and contusions, which the others declared at first 'Served him right!' When however, they found he was really in pain and badly hurt, they gladly put him inside a returning drag, on which they managed to find room, and so ended their expedition to Henley. A rather expensive one for Jack Elliott, as, besides his own personal damage, he felt bound to compensate the stable-keeper for his broken dog-cart and injured horse, both of which had been left behind at the 'Harcourt Arms,' Nuneham.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

A STORY OF THE BLACK HILLS.

By G. HERBERT JALLAND.

I WAS loitering about the long, straggling street of Scoop Town (a small frontier camp consisting of about ten saloons, as many stores, two or three livery stables, and the stage-coach station), waiting for the Deadwood coach to convey me to Rapid City. It was a blazing hot afternoon in the middle of August, and with the exceptions of a half-starved dog trying conclusions with a gaunt sow over a bone, and a team of lazy oxen slowly drawing their load of pine-trees cut from the adjoining forest, the street was deserted and the town seemed asleep. It was four to one on the sow when the ox-team began to pass between me and the combatants, and ere the long line of cattle and pine poles had gone by my ears caught the sound of the approaching coach. Soon it came in sight round the turn enveloped in a cloud of white dust, and its horses almost white with lather. As it rattled up to the station, the dog and sow adjourned to a by-

lane to settle their difference, and I fear the result of the battle has never been recorded. Two or three intending passengers turned out of the 'Overland Hotel' (consisting of four rooms) opposite, and climbed into the interior of the vehicle, which was now at a standstill during the operation of changing horses. I looked inside, but one whiff was enough, and I decided to ride on the box with the driver, in spite of the fierce sun, which shone as it only knows how to shine out West, and threatened to make me a dried and withered mummy ere I reached my destination; but in any case it was better than having to breathe the stifling, stuffy atmosphere which pervaded the interior, for there was not a breath of wind stirring, and as I clambered up to the high perch on which the driver was seated I heard him roundly cussing the heat, the stage company, the dust, and the world in general, as he mopped his face and drank the glass of iced l ager which was handed to him.

'Git! yew dog-garned lazy, over-fed skunks!' he said, as the reins were given him; the fresh team jumped into their collars, and the heavy concord coach started with a crack of the whip and a jingling of harness.

'I'll give yer suthing to buck fur,' muttered the cross-grained driver, bringing his stinging lash round the flanks of the off-leader, who seemed more inclined to prance than do its share of the work.

'Well,' thought I to myself, 'this won't be a very lively sixty miles, with no one to speak to but this bad-tempered fellow,' who did not seem at all inclined to enter into conversation, for after the customary 'How do?' he made no further remarks.

We had gone about two miles on the road, when it struck me if anything would induce this man to be entertaining it might be whisky, and as I had a large flask in my pocket I tried the experiment, and offered it to him with a 'Do you drink, partner?'

'Guess so!' he replied, taking it from my hand and having a good pull. 'Reckon yew're a stranger in this here section, ain't yew?' he asked, giving me back the flask.

I replied in the affirmative.

'Thin I guess yew don't know who I am,' he said.

'No,' I answered, 'I must say I don't.'

'Wall, I'm Ingin Bill,' he replied, 'and I reckon ef yew ain't heered of him, I kin tell yew a little adventur of his which'll kinder help to pass the time between heer and Rapid.'



"Don't go! my near side leader!"

By J. J. Land.

I said I should be very glad to hear the story, and again passed the bottle, as a token of my appreciation of his offer to amuse me. He took another lusty draw, and giving his team a waking up all round, he began his tale. I will not attempt to relate it in the Western drawl in which it was delivered; many of the words would be impossible to spell, and the whole would be almost unintelligible to the English reader.

‘It was just such another day as this,’ he said, ‘but now almost ten years ago. The sun was burning just as strong as it does to-day, and I was driving on the Scoop and Rapid Stage as we are now; but those were different times to these, for then the Sioux were on the war-path, and hardly a day passed without bringing some fearful account of their terrible doings. Only two days before a whole family had been murdered with the exception of a young girl, the cattle had been shot, and the horses driven off, and all within half a mile of a settlement. The brutes! You never knew where they were, and very few passengers patronised the coach in those days; for though it was guarded by two men armed with rifles, we often carried nothing but the mails. Up to the time I speak of no regular organized attack had been made on the coach, but about a month before, a driver was potted by a skulking copper-colour from behind a bush when the coach was almost within sight of Scoop Town. My horses were going nicely—and well I remember the team: there were two bays, a dun, and a piebald, as handy a lot as I ever drove; they were all prairie-reared bronchos, and not the fat heavy States’ horses they now expect me to make good time with. We had got about ten miles out and were passing through a long gulch or ravine, which I will point out to you presently. I and Mike were chaffing Sam, the other guard, about some girl he was sweet on down at Rapid, when our attention was attracted by the figure of a man running across the track about fifty yards ahead. “It’s an Injin, for a dollar!” says Mike, tightening his grasp on his rifle. “Send the horses on, Bill, and look out for a bullet.” I laid the whip across my team and put them into full gallop. The coach swayed and pitched over the uneven road as we flew along, and I had almost congratulated myself we were clear of the ravine as we swung round the last bend before reaching the open prairie, when crack! a puff of smoke from a bush about twenty yards above us, and down goes my near-side leader. In vain I shouted to the crippled team, but, poor brutes! it was

impossible for them to proceed with their dying companion fast in the stout harness, and the next moment they were in inextricable confusion, plunging, snorting, and rearing. A regular fusilade now poured in on us; bullets came crashing into the coach from both sides of the ravine. The guards returned the fire as fast as they could pump their Winchesters, but their chances of hitting our cowardly assailants were very small. Not a man could be seen, the smoky bushes giving the only clue to where an Indian might be concealed. Sam was just in the act of refilling his magazine when he was struck; he gave an awful death yell, threw up his arms, and fell forwards amongst the plunging horses. "Quick! let's get inside and fight it out!" says Mike, putting his words into action and leaping down from the box. I followed his example, but before he could unfasten the coach door he had shared poor Sam's fate. Ugh! it was horrible; a bullet smashed his skull, and as he fell backwards into my arms his blood and brains splashed my face. Tearing his rifle from his clenched hands I wrenched open the door and sprang into the coach; but I found I had almost as well have stayed outside, for the bullets came smashing through the thin panels, and every second I expected to be my last; but the love of life was strong within me, and rapidly I formed a plan of attempting to save myself. I gave a frantic scream as a bullet crashed through the coach, and threw myself forwards out of the half-open door flat on my face on to the dusty road. The moment I fell, the hills resounded with the yells of the triumphant savages, who came rushing down, and were soon clustering round the coach. Their first thought was of booty, for I heard them cutting loose the terrified horses from their tangled harness—and in a few seconds the sound of galloping hoofs announced the fact that the horses were freed, and were being raced away; each, I expect, crossed by a red fiend. You bet I kept mighty quiet while this was going on, hardly daring to breathe. I was covered with poor Mike's blood, and I fondly hoped to be able to keep up the deception until they should have secured what they wanted and left. But I came awfully near to betraying myself when a brute stepped on my back and placed a foot across my neck; and, I tell you, I never felt so inclined to howl as I did when he seized my long hair—for I knew full well what was coming: the next second I felt the sharp sting of his keen knife as he deftly cut a circle round the crown of my head, two or three sharp jerks, a

few more slashes, and off came my scalp: the pain was pretty bad, but I managed to keep quiet, and only prayed he would leave me thus, and not give me a playful dig in the ribs before going. But, come what would, I must breathe, for all this time I had held my breath, fearing to betray myself; now I was suffocating—the blood was rushing to my heart. I must gasp or I should choke. Would he never take his brutal foot off my neck? The suspense was terrible! I expect he was arranging his bloody trophy in his belt, or holding it up for the admiration of his companions, who were crowding round—some trampling on me in their eager scramble for the booty. Suddenly, there was a silence amongst the busy braves, and the next second they were scampering off in wild alarm. Ah! what a relief! That breath of air tasted sweeter than the best whisky I have ever swallowed. Again and again I filled my panting lungs, and when I had recovered sufficiently to turn my attention to the cause of the Indians' sudden flight, I could hear the distant sounds of galloping horses; they came nearer and nearer, until I could distinctly hear the clatter of swords. I was saved; soldiers were coming. As yet I did not dare to move, for I knew if any of the brutes were lurking within gunshot, they would be pretty certain to give me a parting bullet if they knew I was still living; so I lay quite still until I judged my deliverers to be within about fifty yards, when I jumped to my feet, greatly to their surprise. They pulled up, and hurriedly told me they were on the track of a band of Indian robbers, and they believed them to be the very troop who had just attacked the coach. They could waste no time, and after they had ascertained my two friends were past help, one of the soldiers mounted me behind him on his horse, two more accompanying us as a guard, and set off with me back to Scoop Town. The others continued their pursuit of the murderers, but I heard afterwards the Indians got clean away (as usual), and the soldiers returned discomfited to their fort. That's my tale, and there's the very place where it happened,' he said, as we passed a bend in the ravine through which we were travelling; 'here's my head, less the bit of it, which I reckon is fringing some red man's leggings,' taking off his sombrero and exposing a large bald patch on the top of his head, 'and if yew don't feel inclined to swaller the story *now*, jest yew ask old Tom Hilnet, him as keeps the store down at Fort Larimer, for he's the very man who gave me a lift behind his horse into Scoop Town.'

HURRAH FOR THE HEATHER!

A GROUSE-SHOOTER'S SONG.

By CAPT. CLARK-KENNEDY, F.R.G.S., &c. (*late Coldstream Guards.*)



GAIN it is August; again I am free
 As the swallow that skims o'er the waves of the sea!
 Then welcome the season to sportsmen so dear—
 To me it is ever the pride of the year.
 Oh! gay is my heart as I happily dream
 Of the joys of the land of the mountain and stream;
 And happier still when I'm safe in the train,
 And bound for the Heather of Scotland again!

What a glorious day! Just a word ere we part,
 And I'll pledge you a toast from the depth of my heart:
 'May you fill up your bag at a capital rate,
 And may your breech-loader be deadly and straight.
 Here's luck to your lodge—what a bonny wee house—
 And here's your success when you're after the grouse!
 Good luck to your dogs, and good luck to your men,
 And flourish the Heather of Scotland again!'

No monarch I envy! A fig for a throne!
 The gun or the rod for my sceptre I own.
 My kingdom of mountains that reach to the sky
 Is bounded by streams, rushing thundering by!
 My palace, a lodge—such a snug little house;
 My subjects—the joy of my life—are the grouse;
 My garden the Heather, so purple and bright—
 The Heather for ever! sweet flower of delight!

How lovely the moorland! how sweet to the eye!—
 A carpet of purple that touches the sky.
 Though botanists say that no flower can compare
 For beauty with orchids and lilies so rare,
 I'd bid my fair ladylove always be drest
 With heath in her hair, and with heath at her breast!
 Though flowers may be glorious over the sea,
 The Heather of Scotland for ever for me!

We are there! we are there! we are North of the Tweed!
 And have won to our moor at the best of our speed!
 I see your eye brighten with pleasure and pride
 When the gem of your kennel appears at your side—
 What pink of condition! How glossy and sleek!
 How brown are his eyes, and so gentle and meek!

Then up in the morning, and happily forth
With the dogs of your choice on the hills of the North!

Were ever companions more trusty and true,
Whatever the weather, dear doggies, than you?
How you draw to your game! how you patiently stand!
How you drop like a stone to a wave of the hand!
You are worth, bonnie Nellie, your ransom in gold,
And so were your sires in the seasons of old.
And Hector, my beauty, a treasure thou art!
No setter excels thee, old friend of my heart!

The beauties, uncoupled, are off and away,
And range o'er the heather like children at play.
Ah, see how old Hector is scenting the wind!
How beautifully Nellie is backing behind!
By Jove, there's a brood—for a 'poney,' I say!
They lie in the sun at the crest of the brae!
Then whirr! in a moment they're over my head,
And a brace of the number in beauty lie dead!

When we rest at our lunch in the 'beal'* of the hill,
How sweet to our ear is the murmuring rill!
How happy the doggies asleep in the sun!
How gallant the show of the spoils of the gun!
How pleasant the pipe, and how lazy the doze!—
But hark! tis the crow of a cock as he rose,
A crow of defiance; nor crows he in vain—
To the slaughter, away! To the Heather again!

Now evening approaches. The sun in the west
Is sinking in splendour and peace to his rest;
The gillies have spread out our bag on the ground,
And proudly the setters are gambolling round;
And yonder the ladies are counting the spoil,
And bright are the glances rewarding our toil!
But dinner is ready, so haste to the house,
For they who have slaughtered, must dine off, a grouse!

Then flourish, old Scotia, ever the same,
Your lairds and your farmers, your gillies and game!
Your mountains and glens from the South to the North!
Your rivers and streams from Argyle to the Forth!
Your salmon and trout, and your forests and deer!
Here's each of your healths and a prosperous year!
So away to our sport! It is August to-day!
Hurrah for the grouse, and the Heather for aye!

* 'Beal'—shelter.

FROM COWES TO CAPE WRATH;

OR, A RACE FOR A MOOR.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'



RAIG-NA-VROCKAN, Loch Eribol, Sutherlandshire. Grouse (300 brace), black game, and snipe; lodge, comfortable though old-fashioned; good anchorage, and would well suit a yachtsman; climate mild; the Gulf Stream flows under the windows. Rent, 250*l.* the season, inclusive of services of keeper and two dogs. Apply to Hume, Hamesucken, & M'Tavish, writers to the Signet, George Street, Edinburgh; or M'Diarmaid and Jones, grouse-moor-mongers, Piccadilly, London.'

'Seems to be just the sort of place we're in search of, Tony,' said Jack Blackmarsh, owner of the 60-ton yawl *Kitty*, as he laid down the *Field*, the advertisement columns of which he had been carefully perusing; 'good lodge, 300 brace of grouse, and capital anchorage!'

'And the Gulf Stream flows under the windows!' said his companion, Anthony Templetap, barrister of the Inner Temple, whose knowledge of briefs was brevity itself. 'Oh, these Scotchmen! if Paradise was to let, they would touch the description of it up in the papers so as to take in the very Devil himself! However, there's little time to hang over matters. Here we are, with the yacht riding at anchor, in the bay of Cowes on the 5th of August, everybody rushing northwards. We have guns and fishing-tackle on board—ammunition we can easily telegraph for if we wish—and yet we have not chosen our little bit of heather! It's always the same! We resolve to economise and keep away from the Highlands just for one autumn, and then, as the Twelfth of August draws near, we find the old fever comes on us as hot and burning as ever. By all means let us have this Craig-na-Vrockan. If it is good even for half the number of grouse it will do, for neither of us are such gluttons on the bag as we were ten years ago.'

'Then shall I wire the London agent or the Edinburgh lawyers?'

'Oh, the Edinburgh men by all means. They are sure to be working direct with the laird, and so will be able to settle

matters at once; and the quickest way is the best, for it is a long sail from Cowes to Cape Wrath, which is almost on the place; and the sooner we have the *Kitty* under way the better. Wire at once, Jack, and I'll despatch a telegram to Searspring, the St. James's Street gunmaker, to send off 1500 cartridges (twelve-bore, loaded, the same as last year) to Oban, where we can pick them up without losing time. Moor or not, we're sure to go to Oban.'

'Then Craig-na-Vrockan be it; no matter what it is like or where it is situated, the taking of a grouse moor is a gambling matter at the best now-a-days, Tony, my boy, as we have both experienced—and I rather like it. I detest going to one of those Aberdeenshire places as well known as a Thames anglers' inn—a kirk with a steeple always in view, and a tourists' hotel round the corner. Just you give me your telegram for the gunmaker, will you, and I will see both sent off; and you go on board at once and make the skipper get his water-casks filled; also lay in two sacks of coke for the stove, and everything that's needful for a six-days' passage. Once we have made certain of the place, I shall give instructions to forward to Oban full victuals for a two months' stay in the Highlands; for the further north we go, my boy, the less will the bawbees purchase. So heigho for bonnie Scotland and her bonnie Highland hills!'

Whistling an old Scotch air as he descended the steps of the Royal Yacht Squadron Clubhouse at Cowes, Jack Blackmarsh, ablest of Corinthian sailors, and keenest and cleverest of 'gunners,' either behind the traps at Hurlingham or on stubble or heather, made his way to the Post Office, and soon had the pleasure of hearing the dotting-and-dashing young lady who presided over the electric wires busily engaged in sending off his message to the Edinburgh lawyers, and securing Craig-na-Vrockan.

Cowes regatta was over; the racing yachts had left the bay for Ryde, there to compete in the annual matches of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club; Royalty had left Osborne for Balmoral; and most of the large cruising schooners and steamers had departed, some for Norway, there to navigate the fiords, with the cool sharp wind bellying the mainsail or clearing away the black smoke from the funnel; some for Iceland; but the majority for the Western Highlands and islands of Scotland, to lay at anchor off the stately lodges, while the crack of the fowling-piece rang on the heather hillsides and the sharp metallic

'ping' of the deer-stalking rifle amongst the fleecy mist on the higher slopes spoke of the death or narrow escape of the noble stag. No doubt the Isle of Wight possesses many charms for yachtsmen, but when the last gun has been fired from the battery at the Castle to announce the arrival of the winning yacht in the concluding race on the week's programme the Solent begins to look dull, leaden, and dreary; and to those who have spent happy days on the heather the 'wind begins to whistle, "Northward! Northward!"' as Rob Donn, the Gaelic poet, has expressed it, and their hearts go with it.

To know that in little more than a week thousands of sportsmen would be out on the purple hillsides watching the well-bred Gordon setters quartering the heath, or hearkening, with finger on trigger and beating heart, for the whirring sound of the wings of the newly disturbed covey, while one lay becalmed in the Channel listening to the creaking noise of the wave-rocked boom, was enough to bring on a fit of the blues; and so the owner of the *Kitty* and his sailing companion resolved to make the most of the little time they had left themselves for securing their Highland quarters. In less than two hours after the telegram had been handed in, a message boy delivered the requested answer from Hume, Hamesucken, & M'Tavish, to say that Craig-na-Vrockan was let to John Blackmarsh, of Sidhaven, Devonshire, subject to the usual references, which would, no doubt, prove satisfactory.

'Booked now, and no mistake!' said the recipient. 'We must wire particulars of provisions we require at once, and get under way. They can be addressed like the cartridges—"Care of the Oban piermaster." We don't want for cigars and liquor so long as the *Kitty* holds to her anchor, for she is ballasted with boxes and bottles of the best. And now, while the skipper is getting what he wants, let us have a farewell game at billiards, for we won't see a green board for the next ten weeks, my boy.'

It was while Anthony Templetap was cunningly arranging to give that well-known 'miss in baulk' preparatory to starting on the second game of 100 that a telegram was handed in by the club waiter. Blackmarsh tore open the envelope with the remark, 'From the gunmaker, I suppose;' then threw the telegram on the table, with the remark, 'There's a sell for you, Tony!'

Laying down his cue, and picking the brown form up, the

barrister read aloud the contents, which were from Hume, Hamesucken, & M'Tavish, to say that they 'were very sorry,' but that 'Craig-na-Vrockan had been let that morning by London agent per telegram to a Mr. Soapstone, of the schooner-yacht *Kestrel*, at Cowes. Could not parties arrange?'

'What say *you* to that, old boy?' asked Blackmarsh, eagerly. 'Shall we pull on board the *Kestrel*, and see if this Mr. Soapstone won't arrange to let us have it? He *may*, if not very keen on the gun.'

'Beg pardon, Sir,' said the waiter, 'the *Kestrel* left this morning for Scotland, Sir, with Mr. Soapstone and his two daughters on board. He was going to his moor, he said; and we obliged him with some bottles of real Worcester sauce, which he had run short of.'

'Just so, Jack,' said Tony; 'this is always what comes about putting off to the last moment. But I am not inclined to give in. We have secured the moor from the laird's agents, which is a great deal from a legal point of view. The next thing is to take possession. Now, if we knew the legal method of taking possession we would be all right. I'll telegraph to my old friend Bob M'Kenzie, a Scotch Advocate of the Court of Session, asking how to act in the matter; and while we wait his reply get everything on board, and the vessel under way, and we'll race the *Kestrel* for it, nine hours' start though she has, should the law be in our favour!'

'Bravo, old boy! we will. A race for our grouse moor! Why, the very way in which a regatta at Cowes should be wound up! A telegraph form, waiter—quick!'

In half-an-hour afterwards the *Kitty*, under mainsail and jib, was hovering about the bay ready to depart; the captain in his pilot jacket at the tiller, and Tony watching the shore for an expected boat. Soon it shoved out from the landing-place near the Post Office, and whilst the yawl hove up in the wind just to leeward of it Blackmarsh jumped on deck; and as the men hoisted the boat on board, and lashed it amidships, he produced the expected answer, with the remark, 'It reads like a joke, Tony; but, no doubt, it is good honest Scotch law for all that.'

'Scotch law was always a joke to me!'

'And English law too, I should think!' was the response. 'It has never been bread-and-butter to you! But read for yourself.'

The barrister took up the telegram, which ran as follows :—

R. M'Kenzie, Long Room, Parliament House, Edinburgh.	To Templetap, Yacht 'Kitty,' Cowes.
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To secure possession of moor fire two shots at imaginary grouse, fling some sprigs of heather in the air, claim in Queen's name, drink 'Lives of Men and Deaths of Grouse,' and give gamekeeper lots of snuff and whisky.

'It reads very queer ; but it is sound Scotch law I am certain, and not so bad as I thought it would be. We might have been asked to prove our territorial title by dancing the Highland Fling on the topmost tower of the lodge, which, I believe, is still the custom in some remote parts of that barbarous country !'

'Then first on the moor, in your opinion, claims the place, according to your Scotch legal friend—eh, Tony? Speak out quick, for the *Kestrel* by this time is bowling down Channel with a fair wind, and reeling off her nine knots an hour.'

'I have no doubt it is so.'

'Then let the shore-boatman deliver our telegram to the provision people at once, and just write out another, will you, to tell Hume, Hamesucken, & M'Tavish, that we claim possession, and have set sail for Cairn-na-Vrockan.'

Rushing down the companion-ladder, Templetap quickly wrote out the second telegram, as desired. All three were wrapped round a half-sovereign and handed to the boatman, who was well known and trusted at the Castle ; and as he let go his tow-line and bent to his oars the captain shoved the helm away from him, with the call, 'Hoist away the foresail, and make ready to give her the square-headed topsail !' As the men obeyed his orders, the *Kitty* lowered her lee side till the salt-water spurted through the scupper-holes, and the call was, 'Ho for the Highlands ! Round Land's End, my boys, and away northward for Cairn-na-Vrockan, for the red deer, the brown grouse, the blackcock, the yellow trout, and the salmon of green-and-silver !'

In heavy gusts the wind blew hard from off the Wight shore, but minding them not the captain still called upon the men to hoist away the huge topsail ; and soon it was sitting above the mainsail like a piece of cardboard, whilst the gallant vessel, with lee rail almost at the water's edge, raced along with increased

speed, the white jets of foam spurting high from under her fore-foot as every now and then she charged one of the big green waves which came rolling round the Needles and through Yarmouth Roads.

‘Nine hours’ start the schooner has, skipper, and we have got to make that up almost between this and Oban to be certain of our autumn grouse shooting.’

‘We can do it, Sir, if this breeze holds good, as I think it will do, as far as the Lizard, or till we get out of the Channel. We will have northerly winds when we get up to the Scotch coast maybe, and then the schooner will come back to the cutter.’

‘Keep her travelling then night and day, and arrange the watches so that Templetap and myself will give you full assistance. I’ll take the tiller myself any hour you care to call. Pass the grog-can amongst the crew, just as if we were sailing hard in Dublin Bay in the old days of the Royal Alfred matches, for we are racing for a grouse moor, and that is worth more in my opinion than the handsomest Queen’s Cup that was ever turned out of the silversmith’s. Talk about journeying north in a Pullman Car at sixty miles an hour, or even driving north in a four-in-hand (and I’ve gone both ways)! Give me a good yacht-race for it, Templetap, old boy! Not one single brace of birds if you lose, and a glorious six-weeks’ sport on the heather if you win!’

So saying, the owner of the *Kitty* and his companion went below to try and snatch an afternoon snooze on the *weather* cushions; for, however tempting the lee-side might look, they never forgot, like true yachtsmen, to keep up to windward during a race. How they raced down Channel, how they picked up the Start, how they rounded Land’s End and raced up past Mona’s Isle, and then carried a land breeze off the Irish coast as far as Donaghadee, and then rounded the dreaded Mull of Cantire, the *Kitty’s* log will tell you; and Templetap, who has a capital memory, fails not to relate to you full particulars, in true Corinthian-sailor style, over a glass of grog.

CHAPTER II.

IT was close upon seven o’clock on the evening of the 10th of August when a cutter-yacht under whole lower canvas, utterly regardless of the heavy gusts which came down from the hills, raced, with a feather at her stern, into Oban Bay.

The steamers from Skye and Staffa had all discharged their passengers, and the clanging of bells had been succeeded by the music of the German band, which, as usual, was playing on the lawn in front of the Alexandra Hotel. The arrival of a yacht in Oban Bay is not an uncommon sight, but the appearance of a smart-looking cutter, carrying boards for side-lights, and at the same time an extraordinary spread of canvas, was quite unusual. Whilst the loungers on the pier were surmising as to what she would be, and whither she was bound, the jib-topsail, which had been flying on the forestay, was hauled down and stowed, and the cutter, with staysail-sheet to windward, was hove-to, a boat immediately afterwards being smartly launched. If the reader had been on the pier, and failed to recognise the occupants of the stern-sheets as John Blackmarsh and Anthony Templetap, Esquires, he would have been assisted by a look at the jerseys of the four stout men at the oars, for the word 'Kitty' was interwoven on the breasts.

'We wish to see the pier-master, at once,' said Blackmarsh, as the boat drew under the stairs, which were crowded by numerous idle steamboat porters anxious to earn a shilling.

'At your service, Sir!' said that official, who was standing on the quay wall above.

'Have a number of parcels from London, addressed to the yacht *Kitty*, of Cowe's, arrived here?'

'They have, Sir. "John Blackmarsh, Esq., Cutter - Yacht *Kitty*," is the address.

'Then kindly get a porter, will you, to bring them down to the boat. I'm Mr. Blackmarsh, and that's the *Kitty*; and—I say, pier-master, has a schooner-yacht named the *Kestrel* been in the bay?'

'She left the bay, going northward, at four o'clock. The owner just landed to get some stores and letters and a brace of setter dogs which had been sent him from London and went off again. The ladies wanted him to stay, and he had made arrangements to dine at the Alexandra to-night, but after he got his letters he was mad to be off, and would scarcely wait to let his cook fill his water-casks at the pump.'

The owner of the *Kitty* waited to hear no more, but asking the pier-master to see his stores on board, he rushed townwards, leaving Templetap to direct the shipment of the groceries and cartridges, and in a few minutes returned, bearing with him a bundle of letters and telegrams, having been to the Post Office.

‘Let fall!’ he called to the men at the oars, as he took his seat; and soon the boat was alongside the yacht;—the stores were handed on deck, and the square cases of ammunition—in order to be kept free of damp—were ordered below, to be hung as extra ballast in the box of the swing table. As the boat was being hoisted on deck the captain asked,—

‘And what about the schooner, Sir? Do they know anything of her ashore?’

‘Left the bay three hours ago with a tearing breeze, and every stitch of canvas that would hang on her all drawing. The owner, evidently, had got a telegram from the Edinburgh lawyers to say that we had left Cowes to take possession.’

‘No doubt, Sir! and we have to race for it now; for though the owner of the schooner has been sailing hard all the time, that has only been with the view of getting on the heather in the opening morning. Now he is sailing to beat us. No doubt, too, he thinks that we are making straight for Ardnamurchan and the Sound of Sleat, outside the island of Mull—as, indeed, we should have done. However, we shall do our best.’

‘There’s no help for it, I’m afraid, skipper; but try and get us our autumn’s shooting if you can!’

‘Ay, ay, Sir!’ was the call, followed by the order: ‘Be smart there to get the spinnaker boom out on the port side, for, squalls or no squalls—even though we should drag the mast out of her—we shall run her across Loch Linnhe and up the Sound of Mull with every yard of cloth she can carry!’

The men lost no time in executing the order, and soon the *Kitty* was racing through the Sound of Kerrara, a complete cloud of canvas, such as the Highland fishermen were rarely accustomed to see, and away under the dark Shadows of Morven. Cruising-yawls and cutters were picked up one by one by the once famous racing 60-tonner, the steersmen wondering what great channel race was being sailed, and directing their binoculars astern to see if any vessels were in pursuit. Some dipped their flags and ran up club signals, but the captain of the *Kitty*, though not lacking in courtesy, acknowledged them not, for the old vessel’s racing-flag—which he had nailed to the masthead—was sufficient explanation, even though the race they were engaged in was not entered on a programme.

With the preventer-backstay straining like an overscrewed fiddle-string, and the mast bending like a bit of whalebone before

the shower-laden blasts which came up in their wake, and tore the huge spinnaker away forward like a balloon at times, the *Kitty*, with the salt water seething under her, soon ran past Aros and Tobermory, and out past Ardmore Point, where the wind drew out of the eastward, and the call, 'In spinnaker!' led to the handing of the huge twin-mainsail. Scarcely was the boom made fast on deck than the order was given to 'Get the jib-topsail on her!' and with this dragging her through the water the gallant little vessel, which had slackened not her pace since she left Oban, sprang to the shore breeze like a startled fawn, and with the foam hissing and white in her chains, and her snowy canvas shining in the moonlight, went off like some Highland spectre or 'ghaist' for Sleat, with the huge Atlantic billows hissing like angry water-kelpies as they broke amongst the dark ragged reefs of Ardnamurchan. Keeping the boat 'full and bye,' the skipper steered his course almost straight for Armadale Castle, the stately residence of Macdonald the Laird of the Isles, watching carefully for the blasts which sweep down in the night-time from the long glens of Lochiel. Oft came the sharp command, 'Stand by the topsail-halliards!' as the wind, like some dark and unseen angel, pressed the gallant cutter over on her side, till she tried to race from under it with the roar of running water, which broke on her deck, and tore like the mountain spate when driven from its channel up and over the taffrail; often was the jib-topsail lowered and made fast on the bowsprit, and only to be run up again when the lulls came. No faster sailed the Clansman steamboat for Portree and Stornaway; no straighter ever flew the crow; and soon Isle Ornsay, most tempting of anchorages, was lying on the lee-beam, and the cormorants of Ardentive were startled from the cliffs as, with the strong tide in her favour, she raced up the Narrows.

It was morning when Strome Ferry was brought 'a-weather,' and as the sun struck on the Coolin Hills, and burnished the peak of Blaven, Jack Blackmarsh, who came on deck to take his turn at the tiller, looked anxiously a-head for the *Kestrel*, but the *Kestrel* could not be seen. 'Keep the main shore,' was the skipper's remark, 'the wind blows honest from the sou-sou-east here;' and so, with every stitch drawing, Raasay and Rona's Isle were kept to leeward. Gairloch held many yachts, but not their Cowes rival—they could see when they opened up that famous anchorage near to Loch Maree. Yet,

away ahead, standing out from Loch Inver, they could make out a schooner, closing up every now and then the mouths of the glens beyond, and showing that she was travelling fast through the water.

‘If the wind were but to check her for an hour,’ said the skipper, who had come on deck again, ‘we would soon lay her under our lee, but as it is we shall have to do what we can ; so be smart, there, forward, and let us get the spinnaker on the bowsprit. She will carry it all, like the good honest girl she is !’ With the huge sail set as a jib the *Kitty* closed up on the object of pursuit till the captain—as he closed the binocular, through which he had been peering, exclaimed, as he laid the glass on deck again : ‘The *Kestrel*, and no mistake ! I would know her in a hundred from the high peak of her mainsail.’

It was night-time—night-time on the eve of the Twelfth of August, when many a young grouse-cock dreams his last dream under the bunch of heather, and next day, with his head under his blood-stained wing, is along with his mates packed in some rude game-box on his way to Leadenhall Market, when the cutter was under the bluffs of Laxford, and the last streaks of the setting sun still glinted on Ben Stack, the haunt of many a red deer. The schooner was then with the tide in her favour, but, the wind heading her off, standing in under the ragged and beetling cliffs of Cape Wrath.

‘We shall have her, boys, yet !’ said the captain of the *Kitty*, as his keen eyes readily detected the close hauling of the schooner’s canvas. ‘She can never get away from us turning to windward. How far do you make it to Loch Eribol by the chart, Mr. Blackmarsh !’

‘About twelve miles or so from the lighthouse.’

Soon the cutter was under those bluffs which have been the terror of mariners since the days of the Norse Vikings, but just as the lighthouse gave out across the wave its first flash, which cast a long bright line across the water, the schooner seemed to pick up a land-breeze, and with a free sheet stood across Loch Durness to weather Durris Head, bursting up a long phosphorescent wake, as, with lee-side bent low to it, she raced ahead.

‘Luck is again with her !’ said the skipper of the *Kitty*, in savage tones : but ‘Ho ! my good lass !’ he added, as he felt the fresher and freer wind fill the canvas of his own boat, ‘we have it too !’

‘Ease off head and main-sheets,’ was the order which followed, ‘and let fly the jib-topsail!’ With the breeze steady and broad on the beam the cutter did not gain much on the schooner; but as soon as they opened up the anchorage of Loch Eribol and the sheets had to be hauled in flat the cutter’s rig began to tell in her favour. In the first tack, the schooner came across the loch a hundred yards a-head of the *Kitty*, from which could be seen Mr. Soapstone standing with his two daughters, evidently trying to make out by the moonlight the lodge of Cairn-na-Vrockan, as defined on the chart.

‘It seems very hard to wrest their summer quarters from them, Tony,’ said Blackmarsh, whose bachelor heart was touched by the fair vision; ‘but let us win first and tie, and wrangle afterwards.’

‘Ready about! Lee helm!’ broke in the captain in the next minute, and soon the cutter was springing off on starboard tack to meet the schooner coming off on port tack, which carries not with it the rule of the road. ‘*We have won* now, Sir,’ was his remark, as the *Kestrel*, being forced to give way, passed close under the *Kitty*’s stern.

‘And all we have to do is to take possession,’ was Anthony Templetap’s remark. ‘So be smart to lower the boat as soon as the anchor is down.’

The lodge on the hillside was by this time plainly perceptible, and, as directed in the chart, the captain steered close under, and then let go his anchor, the rattling sound of the chain-cable of which was no sooner finished than the splash and rattle of the *Kestrel*’s anchor and chain was heard astern, followed by call to the men to ‘man the cutter.’

‘Ho, ho! Mr. Soapstone, so you mean also to take possession in Scottish fashion! but you will be too late, my fine fellow! So, Cutter away!—sharp!’

CHAPTER III.

‘THIRDLY and lastly, ma brethren,’ said a Scottish parson in finishing up a charity sermon, ‘I will conclude with a short but practical application of the first and second parts of my discourse by sending the beadle round with the collecting-plate; and oh, ma brethren, let us hope for a golden response!’ Our third and last chapter will be short, and will possess the wished-for happy termination.



No sooner had the *Kitty's* gig stranded on the gravelly beach than Jack Blackmarsh fired the two shots and flung the tufts of heather in the air, claiming possession in the Queen's name as he did so, whilst his friend Tony drank 'Lives of Men and Deaths of Grouse' out of the flask lid, and looked round anxiously for the keeper.

For that functionary they had not long to wait, as, roused by the two shots, he came rushing down the hill, looking exceedingly vicious, and terribly anxious, seemingly, to secure the poachers, for the object of his life was to get a conviction against somebody—he cared not though it was the parish minister—in order to be alongside of his brethren of more southern latitudes, who presumed much on their legal knowledge through occasional attendances at the Justice-of-Peace Courts at Dornoch or Dingwall.

'Who fired these shots?' he said, approaching Templetap, who stood near to administer the required snuff and whisky, according to law.

'I *did*,' said Blackmarsh, 'to show that I am the rightful lessee of the moor.'

'Which you cannot well be, Sir,' said Mr. Soapstone, as he approached, leaving behind him his daughters seated in the boat, for they had resolved to have a first peep at the place by moonlight. 'Cairn-na-Vrockan was let to me by telegram on 5th of August, but I believe there was some mistake, and it was let afterwards to a Mr. Blackmarsh.'

'I am Mr. Blackmarsh,' said the owner of the *Kitty*. 'Mr. Soapstone, I believe, I have the pleasure of addressing?'

Mr. Soapstone bowed, and said, 'I am not enough of a shot, Mr. Blackmarsh, to wish to deprive an enthusiastic sportsman of what must be very dear to him—the pleasures of grouse shooting. Indeed, I am no shot at all. I merely leased Cairn-na-Vrockan to secure the lodge for my daughters, the anchorage being convenient.'

'Then the matter is easily arranged,' said Templetap. 'We would rather not live in the lodge, as we prefer making the yacht our home. So we will share the rent, and my friend and myself will shoot the grouse, and give you as many birds as you want for your larder or to send to your friends.'

'Bravo, Tony!' said Blackmarsh; 'the very thing! And Mr. Soapstone also expressed his approval, though the keeper scratched his head, and said it 'was a gey and queer business

althegither, and he was na verra sure shust but Dornock Jail was the proper lodge for folk that arrived in siccan a way at the middle o' the nicht.'

* * * * *

There were many happy nights spent that season at Cairn-na-Vrockan, and there have been many happy nights spent since, for the lodge is leased by Mr. Soapstone with the view of providing sport for his two sons-in-law, Anthony Templetap and John Blackmarsh, Esquires. The happiest evening of all, however, is when 'Bob' M'Kenzie, now Sheriff M'Kenzie, comes over with two friends, both of them successful Scotch advocates, and tells, amidst mirth and laughter, about the making up of that telegram giving instructions as to the manner in which a grouse-moor should be legally taken possession of, finishing up with an illustration—snuff, mull, and whisky-flask in hand—in front of the lodge windows. Jack Blackmarsh then gives a spirited description of the yacht race from Oban, where, indeed, the struggle for the moor actually commenced, his father-in-law good-naturedly informing him that he will race him in the *Kestrel*, which is still his property, any day he likes from Cowes to Cape Wrath, and that had he known in the English Channel that the *Kitty* was trying to overtake and pass him he would have been snug in Cairn-na-Vrockan when the cutter arrived at Loch Eribol, and, with the assistance of the keeper, had both of his opponents convicted for night-poaching instead of allowing them to take possession of his moor, his shooting-lodge, and, worst of all, his daughters.

MY LAST KANGAROO HUNT.

By 'BOOMER.'



I, Fred! wake up, you lazy beggar! 'Tis time to be off!

Such are the exclamations that greet me one fine morning towards the middle of December, just as I am about to turn over and indulge in a second sleep; and I find myself, after a violent hustling and shaking, suddenly deposited, *nolens volens*, mattress and all, on the matted floor of my bedroom.

'Hey! What the dickens are you about? Is the *run* on

fire?' I murmur sleepily, rubbing a shin that has come into violent contact with the bedpost.

'Blazing!' says my companion dryly, while I exclaim, 'By Jove! is it though?' as I spring to my feet, and rush to the open window. But though I peer in every direction across the stretch of country before me, not the veriest trace of fire or smoke can I perceive; and I begin to think that I have been basely deceived. Hearing a suspicious chuckle, I turn hastily, and am just in time to see Lindesay's stalwart proportions disappearing from the room, while he laughingly remarks,—

'Don't exert yourself, dear boy; it's only the sun, and the kangaroos are waiting!'

'Confound you!' I retort, as I relieve my injured feelings with a boot, which whizzes down the corridor, and just misses its mark, as Lindesay ducks, turns, and implores me, in a tragic tone (*from a safe distance*), not to waste my energy on the desert air. So I give him up as incorrigible, and, having gone through 'tub' parade, proceed to equip myself for the day (with much grumbling the while at having to leave my comfortable bed at the early hour of 4 a.m.), and struggle into my light buckskins; which, by the way, remind me of the aggrieved young man in *Punch*, who, on visiting his tailor, remarks, in a melancholy tone, 'Oh! I say, Snips, these bags are much too tight, you know. 'Why, I have to get my legs in with a *shoe-horn*!'

Crowning my curly head with a shady pith helmet and 'puggaree,' I finish my toilet by sticking a sheath-knife in my belt; and, taking my 'stock' whip from its rack, hasten to the breakfast-room to refresh the inner man before starting. I find I am last down, and my companions are busily engaged discussing grilled chops and kidneys. My entrance is greeted with many good-natured remarks; and, as I wish my guests 'Good morning,' I shake my fist at Lindesay, and join in the laugh, as I perceive he has been making the most of the comical way he has routed me out of bed.

Having scrambled through a hasty, but hearty, breakfast, the horses are brought round to the veranda, and, after a careful inspection of girths and bridles, with much unparliamentary language to the somewhat restive horses, we are at last in our saddles, and set off—a merry party of six. Riding together in front, discussing the prospects of the late wool crop, are Darley and Frith, two young squatters from neighbouring

stations, who are staying with me for the shearing ; next come Hervey and Clarke, who have come up from Melbourne to spend Christmas with me ; a little behind the two latter is Lindesay Pace, my chum and partner, with, sixthly and lastly (as the clergy frequently remark), myself, Fred Willis, of Mangaline Station. Bringing up the rear, in the background, is Jo, my general factotum (who accompanies me on all my fishing and hunting excursions), in charge of the dogs, three wiry-looking animals, which belong to the class here termed 'Kangaroo dogs,' but are in reality more like the breed of Scotch deer-hounds of the old country than anything I have ever seen. The three above-mentioned go by the names of Ranger, Jumbo, and Bounce, and are my especial favourites, for many a good day's sport have I had with them in the Australian bush. Our destination is some low-lying country about fifteen miles away, at the foot of the Victoria Ranges—a favourite feeding-place of the kangaroo and emu.

So we nurse our horses, and jog steadily along out of the 'home paddock,'* and over the open plains, where the magpies are warbling an early song in the isolated clumps of gum-trees, and the scattered flocks of sheep fly in all directions as we approach them.

It is a glorious morning. The air, as yet cool and fresh, is sweet with the scent of mimosa and wattle. Old Sol is just showing his golden head over the distant ranges, like a huge ball of fire ; and as we enter the dense forest the 'laughing jackasses' herald his advent by bursting forth into their noisy 'ha-ha-ha,' sending a dissipated old 'possum,' who has been keeping late hours, scuttling away to his nest in the dark hollow of some ancient gum-tree. As we ride slowly on the silence is broken by the chattering of parrots and parroquets, who utter a protest at our invasion of their solitude.

Overhead, through the spaces of the trees, we catch a glimpse of a cloudless blue sky, while under our feet the cool green ferns spread a picturesque carpet, and here and there the monotony is broken by the bell-like blossoms of the correa and feathery fronds of maidenhair. As we pick our way, riding in pairs, through the ferns, many of which come up to our horses' flanks, a startled 'joey'† springs up from the bracken, and hops away

* On a sheep station, the large field surrounding the house of the squatter.

† A young kangaroo.

in hot haste, never stopping till he has put some distance between us, when he halts, with uplifted paws, and, after a shy glance over his shoulder, is off and away again.

'Hop on, young fellow, your hour is not yet come,' says Darley, as we call in the dogs and continue our ride. Some half-an-hour later, when nearing our hunting-ground, one of our party dismounts, and creeps quietly forward to within a mile of the Ranges, which seem, even at this distance, to tower over us, silent and unfathomable. Some fifteen minutes pass, when at a sign from Frith we ride stealthily forward and join him.

'There's an "old man" yonder!' he whispers, pointing to a distant clump of gum-trees at the foot of the mountain. As we press eagerly forward, one of our party remarks, 'By Jove! he is a boomer!' By this time we are well within sight of our game, and as we creep closer and closer the dogs are wild to be off.

A fine 'old man' kangaroo he is, standing some five feet six, with his tawny grey fur and stately head in bold relief against the dark green background of the mountain, at the foot of which he is quietly grazing, being as yet quite unaware of an enemy in the camp.

When about a hundred yards off he scents us, and, standing upright, with one scornful glance from his glorious brown eyes, is off and away. With a shout of 'At him, boys!' the dogs are set on, and we follow in full chase, crashing over the *débris* of timber and stumps, helter skelter through the ferns, as we skirt the side of the mountain.

As I sweep on, with now and then an encouraging word to my plucky black horse, I catch a glimpse of the rest of the party. Away to my right are Darley and Clarke, riding hard together, with Frith close up; near me is Hervey; while the rest are scattered a little to my left.

'Yoicks!' Away we go, over a stretch of open country where the flocks of frightened cockatoos fly screeching overhead. Then into a patch of forest, where we have to ride all we know to avoid the trees, with many a dexterous stoop of the body and sway of the head to escape the overhanging branches. This lasts for about a mile, and is somewhat trying; but at last it is over, and we emerge into the open, and again set off at a glorious pace across the comparatively clear country.

'Hurrah! boys. What a day we're having!' shouts Lindesay,

as he passes me at full gallop, pounding along on his great bay horse.

We have reached a formidable boundary-fence by this time. It is a stiff post and rail ; but it is all or nothing, so Frith and Lindesay pull their horses together, and pop over as lightly as if the obstacle were only a low hurdle, while I hold the 'Demon's' head hard, and set him at the rasper. We get over *somehow* ; and as the Demon reaches *terra firma*, and I follow my two leaders up the steeply sloping rise on the other side, I have time to glance over my shoulder at the rest of the party.

Darley, I perceive, is down, and his horse is tearing away in the direction of home, while Clarke is using his utmost persuasive powers to get my favourite mare Brownie over ; but the latter, evidently thinking discretion the better part of valour, obstinately refuses to have anything to do with the fence. Hervey is nowhere visible.

On reaching the top of the rise I perceive the kangaroo still going at a tremendous pace, with the dogs well settled to their work. The kangaroo is heading towards a clump of ti-tree fringing the banks of a creek—the former consists of a dense scrub—and my heart sinks, for if the 'old man' enters this stronghold it will be all up with our sport.

As I dash down the rise, I debate in my own mind whether it will be better to enter the scrub or follow Lindesay, who is making a *détour*, and skirting the side of it. But there is no time for hesitation, and being close up to the ti-tree I follow Frith's example, and dash into it after the retreating dogs and game. With a crash my horse bounds forward, and, breaking down some saplings, picks his way along one of the many kangaroo tracks (this being evidently one of their favourite drinking-places). A little in advance Frith is doing likewise.

'Look out ! Snake !' he shouts, as we ride on ; and a large black snake darts across the path and into the creek, along the banks of which we are riding. As I glance back I see the ugly brute, whose head is just visible, swimming rapidly across the narrow bit of water. On we go, somewhat slowly, through the ti-tree for about a mile, till we come to another open bit of country.

'There he goes ! Come on, old boy !' shouts Frith ; and we again put spurs to our horses, and try to make up for lost time as we urge them on.



"Ranger falls back with a
pirating yell."

G. H. J. J. J.



In the distance, disappearing over a rise, we can see the kangaroo, with the dogs well up, and Lindesay some hundred yards in rear. The kangaroo is going somewhat unsteadily, for evidently the pace is telling, and the dogs are gaining. But, truly, he is a grand old fellow. Away we go in full chase across the now somewhat stony country, avoiding the rocky, lichen-covered boulders, on one of which a huge green lizard 'lies a-basking in the sun.' Away we go, at headlong speed, down the slope, and over the rising hill, sending the startled wallaby hopping away in all directions.

'He's nearly done, and so am I!' pants Frith, as together we clear a fallen gum-tree.

True enough, as we reach the top of the rise we see the kangaroo, with the dogs well up, and almost upon him, for he is nearly spent. As we dash down the hill after Lindesay's retreating figure, the 'old man' again comes up with the creek; it is evidently rather a deep corner, and the kangaroo hesitates for a second, and is lost. In an instant the dogs are up with him, and he turns and stands at bay, while they spring at his throat, sending the fur flying in all directions. With one stroke of his powerful hind foot he fells Ranger to the ground, and the latter falls back with one piercing yelp, his body ripped up from end to end.

The other dogs hang back for a second, and Lindesay, arriving on the scene, hastily dismounts, and, cutting in behind the kangaroo, with a well-aimed thrust from his powerful knife despatches him, and the 'old man' rolls over dead!

'Hurrah! a glorious run!' we shout, as Frith and I, riding up, dismount, and ease the girths of our reeking horses.

'Well done, Lindesay! he *is* a boomer!' I remark, as I run past the dead beast to look at Ranger, who is dying fast.

'Poor old fellow! It has been a sad day for you,' I say, bending over the faithful old hound, who even as I do so gives one last lick at my hand, and with a piteous moan lies dead at my feet.

'Ah, well! he has gone to the happy hunting-grounds now!' I think, as I turn hastily away, and with a long-drawn sigh of regret busy myself with the horses.

Lindesay and Frith are hard at work skinning the kangaroo, and having finished and cut off his tail (the latter will make excellent soup for our dinner to-night), and thrown the carcase to the dogs, we tie up our horses, and, loading our pipes,

prepare to enjoy a well-earned repose under the shade of a large shey-oak tree. For the sun is high in the heavens by this time, and old Sol is pouring down his relentless rays over the plain, and we are glad enough to get into the shade and rest after our hard riding. As we lie on the cool grass, and contemplate the Ranges, which rise up before us, enveloped in a soft blue mantle of haze, and which, judging by their appearance, are some ten miles distant, we discuss the late events of the hunt, and all agree that it has been a capital day's sport.

After an hour's rest we call up the dogs, and with a farewell look at poor Ranger we proceed on our homeward journey. As we jog slowly on we stop at intervals to sweep the surrounding country in search of the rest of our party, but for some time can find no trace of them.

'Hark! there goes a coo-ee,' says Frith at last, his sharp ears having caught a faint sound in the distance; and putting his hands to his mouth, he sends a ringing 'coo-ee' echoing through the great forest, waking the (for once) quiet parrots and cockatoos, who are indulging in a mid-day *siesta*, and sending them chattering and screeching away over our heads.

'Coo-ee—coo-ee!' answers a voice in the distance, and the sounds get louder and louder, till our companions appear in sight and join us. As we ride homewards together we relate how we finished our run, and our comrades evince much disgust at not having been in at the death.

'Jo' is much distressed at the loss of my (and his) favourite dog, and I give orders that two of the men are to go out in the cool of the evening and bury the poor brute. Clarke and Darley, it appears, have been companions in misfortune ever since we passed the boundary-fence, and Hervey came to grief early in the day with a broken girth.

As we cross the home paddock, and come in sight of the cool-looking bungalow house, I for one feel not a little relieved to be within reach of cool quarters, with an early prospect of 'a tub' and (shall I confess it?) iced drinks.

So ends my last hunt (December, 1886) at the Victoria Ranges.

THE RIVAL ROSES.

By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'



WHEN the 'Last of the Barons' was foremost in fight,
 The strife of the Roses, the Red and the White,
 In characters crimson, on many a plain,
 Wrote the tale of their struggles in blood of the slain.
 Now the sword is laid by, and the rivalry's seen
 When the great Northern batsmen appear on the green.

Chorus:

The willows well wielded, well trundled the ball,
 The Tykes are broad-shouldered, and stalwart, and tall,
 O'er the proud peaks of Pennine their equals we find—
 They're a tough team to tackle, 'The Roses' combined.

Oh, how loud rings the cheering when Ulyett appears!
 He's welcomed through England and has been for years;
 Not only round Sheffield, but through the broad shires,
 Every son of the willow blithe Georgy admires.
 Then a captain like Emmett we seldom can meet,
 While old Tom at a 'break-back' few bowlers could beat.

The willows well wielded, &c.

When the North and the South for the victory strive,
 Then Hornby's the man the South bowlers to drive;
 To view him the public their shillings will pay,
 And the scorers work hard to the end of his stay.
 Says the novice, 'Where's Hornby?' the answer comes pat,
 'Why of course he's the man *that plays minus his hat.*'

The willows well wielded, &c.

Lascelles Hall and Old Trafford sure nurseries are found,
 To feed the two counties with colts for each ground;
 And the Palatine names in each 'Varsity team
 A long bed-roll of 'honour men' constantly gleam:
 By the Cam and the Isis the teams would grow weak,
 If they lost the twin Roses from north of the Peak.

The willows well wielded, &c.

From the Lune to the Mersey, from Tees to fair Trent,
 May players as staunch to the wickets be sent.
 The choice of their champions from favour be free—
 That it has been in past time we all must agree;
 Their professional talent they ne'er set aside,
 Nor a gentleman leave out when well he's been tried.

The willows well wielded, &c.

So a health to the York, to the Lancaster Rose,
 Still prove they a match for their cricketing foes;
 May breezes right bracing unceasingly blow
 On their banners triumphant, wherever they go.
 When the Roses contend for the palm in the game,
 One *must* win, but I trow they part friends all the same.

The willows well wielded, &c.

MY FIRST APPEARANCE IN SILK.

A STORY OF SANDOWN.

By 'MARMADUKE MUFFE.'



AMONGST other swells who crossed over the herring-pond with that enterprising person, William the Conqueror, was a young gentleman named Malvoisin de Muffe, a *protégé* and godson of the celebrated Hugo de Malvoisin, who had, after a good deal of difficulty, persuaded the youth's fond mother to let his godson join the expedition under his guidance, in order that he might, if it were possible, make a man of him: 'Which he never will be, my dear madam, as long as he hangs to *your* petticoats,' added bluff Sir Hugo.

Appointed, therefore, to the personal Staff of his gallant godfather, he came over in the same vessel with the Conqueror himself, and great sport he afforded the company on board the *Fleur de Lys* during the voyage. His young companions in arms, soon finding out what a milksop they had to deal with, amused themselves at his expense accordingly, and many and various were the tricks they played him. Chocolate creams and bottled porter are not, we should imagine, the best preventives in the world against *mal-de-mer*, but these choice spirits declared they were; and de Muffe, being flat enough to believe them, suffered accordingly: so that, by the time they landed at Margate jetty, the unfortunate youth was more dead than alive, as may well be imagined. Worse was to follow.

Hugo, or Marshal de Malvoisin, as he was generally called—for, of course, he was a Marshal of France, with the *Légion d'Honneur* and all the rest of it—always the first to be up and doing,—had no sooner landed, and got his own and his staff's

chargers together, than he went off express pace for the purpose of making a reconnaissance in the enemy's country. All went well until they arrived at what they imagined was a deserted farmhouse. Not a soul was to be seen about the premises, which were apparently tenanted only by the usual inhabitants of the strawyard ; and having requisitioned a few of the farmer's best young chickens and ducks, the party were about to depart, when, as ill-luck would have it, a styful of dear little pink sucking-pigs attracted the attention of the gallant Marshal. Fond of pork, he determined at once on one of the piggy-wiggies for his dinner that night. 'Get down from your *cheval, ben garçon,*' said he, beckoning to his godson, 'and procure me one of those *petits cochons toute suite*, if not sooner.'

No sooner said than done. The obedient aide-de-camp quickly dismounted, and, having vaulted over the sty, was soon amongst the young porkers. Having secured one under each arm he was about to join his companions, when a loud voice close by was suddenly heard saying,—

'Now then, young veller, what be you a-doing, dang ee, amongst my young pigs?'

At the same moment the huge doors of a barn close by flew open, as if by magic, and forth rushed tumultuously a mob of rustics armed with pitchforks, rakes, and scythes, and made a dash at the horses' heads of the Marshal and his staff.

'*Sauve qui peut !*' was the cry ; for, though as brave a cock as ever pinked his man in the Bois de Boulogne, still he could not make a stand against such overwhelming odds ; so, amidst a Kentish fire of turnips and mangold wurzels, Sir Hugo and his followers took to their heels, or, rather, their horses' heels, and fairly bolted.

The hapless de Muffe, embarrassed as he was with a little pig under each arm, was unable to get to his horse in time, and was, of course, promptly collared by the farmer and his merry men, and by them duly escorted in triumph as a prisoner of war to the camp of the Ancient Britons.

Arrived there, and having been brought before the General in command, there was no end of discussion as to what they should do with him. Some were for cross-bowing him on the spot, as a warning to William the Norman and his followers ; others, more lenient, were for painting him blue and letting him go. At last a venerable Druid—the Chaplain to the Forces, indeed—struck by the *distingué* air of the young man, and thinking it would

be a rare opportunity for his daughters—of whom he had seven—to learn French on the cheap, offered to take him, if agreeable to the General, into his household for the time being. His offer being accepted, and de Muffe, having given his *parole d'honneur* not to bolt, the latter was set free, and at once installed as a friend of the family in the reverend gentleman's snug vicarage. Here he quickly made himself very much at home.

Playing lawn-tennis and croquet with the seven young ladies, who were all excessively pretty, he found infinitely preferable to fighting Ancient Britons; and the consequence was that when, after a two-months' absence, the Chaplain returned from the wars, he found the Frenchman engaged to Ethelreda Boadicea, the youngest and prettiest of his daughters. They were married soon afterwards, and de Muffe, now the Normans had got the upperhand, being rather a great gun and liking the country—not to mention the beefsteaks and *porterre-bierre*—determined to stop where he was instead of returning to La Belle France and his fond mother.

This, then, is the true history of my great ancestor, the founder of all the Muffes—the greatest Muffe that ever was, in fact. Can it be wondered at, then, that I, Marmaduke Muffe, the recognised head of the family, should long for the opportunity of showing, by performing some deed of 'derring do' worthy of a descendant of the hero of the Kentish pigsty, that the old Malvoisin spirit was not yet extinct?

It was soon to come.

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'Oh, Mister Muffe! I am so pleased you have come!' exclaimed the adored one of my heart, Laura Lightfoot, jumping up from her chair as I entered her mother's drawing-room in Eaton Square, and greeting me with the greatest *impressement*. 'Oh, I am so glad you've come!' repeated she; 'for I am in *such* trouble—*such* distress—you can't think. You know—don't you?—that I had matched my chestnut mare, Fatima, against Captain's Famish's horse, Sentry-Go—at least my brother did for me—it's all the same—at Sandown next week. Well, Jack was to ride Fatima, and now we have had a letter from him this morning saying that he has had a bad fall and broken his collar-bone, and won't be able to ride Fatima; and the race is down for next Saturday; and I've backed Fatima with all my friends for gloves without end! And I was so looking forward to it! And I had worked a jacket and cap for Jack, my own

colours—p-p-pink-and-white hoops and b-b-black cap (*sob*),—and now I shall have to p-p-pay forfeit—fifty pounds—(*sob*), unless I can get somebody to ride in place of Jack. Major Moustache has just written me word he would have ridden gladly ; but he can't ride under twelve stone, and Fatima has only got eleven to carry against Sentry-Go's twelve. Oh, Mr. Muffe ! could not you come to the rescue ? I know you hunt, and you don't look very heavy. Will you ride Fatima for me ? I'm sure you'll win if you do ; something tells me you will !' And the fair Laura, clasping her two little hands together, looked up into my face in the most beseeching manner possible.

Of course I consented. How could I refuse ? Besides which, there was a chance of keeping up the family reputation not to be thrown away. The question was, How was the weight to be managed ? I pulled down over eleven stone, I knew. However, I determined nothing should stand in the way of success ; and as no time was to be lost—it was now Thursday, and the match was to come off on the following Saturday week—I commenced my wasting for the great event that very day by only partaking of a piece of dry toast and a glass of pale sherry for luncheon, much to the horror of good-natured Mrs. Lightfoot and the admiration of the excited Miss Laura, who declared that she could see me getting thinner already.

What a time I had of it, to be sure, between Thursday and the day of the race ! Fatima, a thoroughbred chestnut mare by Barbe Bleu, had been made a present to Miss Laura for a hack by her uncle, Sir Ralph Rowdy, the well-known turfite, as being too slow for racing purposes ; and she was now at Epsom under the charge of Tom Trimmer the trainer, who had under his charge one or two steeplechasers the property of the fair Laura's brother Jack, a sporting subaltern in one of Her Majesty's Hussar regiments, with orders to get her as fit as possible for the race at Sandown. Her opponent, Sentry-Go, was an aged brown horse, who had distinguished himself in several military races, both across country and on the flat ; and on the present occasion he was to give a stone to Fatima ; partly, it is to be presumed, because it was thought he was the better of the two, and also because Captain Famish, his owner, who was to ride him, was an experienced gentleman-rider, and supposed to be even capable of giving at least 7 lbs. away to Jack Lightfoot on the score of jockeyship.

The race was to be two miles on the flat, and the trainer's

opinion on the matter, after I had gone down and ridden the mare in a gallop or two, was that, though Sentry-Go could stay for a week ; owing to his having been steeplechased so much, he was as slow as a top : 'the consequence of which is,' said he, 'if you only waits on him until a distance from 'ome, and then rides with your 'ed as well as your 'eels, and comes just at the very right moment, I'm blowed if you won't win. You see,' he added, 'Captain Famish is an old 'and at the game ; and you'll excuse me, I know, for saying, Sir, that you ain't—in fact, you tells me it's the first time you ever rode a race. Wery good. The Captain is one of the best finishers I ever saw for an amatoor, and if you once let him get alongside of you, if it comes to a race, why, it's all up with the mare. But if you only do as I tell you, and wait until a distance from 'ome, and *then* let the mare out, mark my words, and he'll never catch you !'

Laying the trainer's words to heart, I returned to town after my first gallop on Fatima, with my knuckles raw from rasping against the mare's withers (for she was a bit of a puller), and much attenuated by fasting and wasting, and reported progress to the fair Laura.

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The eventful day at length arrived, and though burning with the old chivalric desire to distinguish myself, yet it must be confessed as I looked upon my attenuated features in the looking-glass, and later on partook of breakfast—if you could so call a meal which consisted of a morsel of dry toast and a bottle of soda-water (and, as a rule, I have such an appetite)—that I couldn't help thinking to myself that I should be uncommonly glad when the whole affair was over and I could rest on my laurels, and once more live like an ordinary Christian.

To make it more hard to bear, several of my friends did me the honour of dropping into breakfast.

'Don't you envy me, old fellow ?' said Bob Lovel, swigging off a large glass of '74 Giessler with immense satisfaction, and helping himself immediately after to a second go of devilled kidneys.

Envy him ! I should rather think I did, indeed ! However, it would all be over by four o'clock, which was a consolation to my feelings ; and, as Bob facetiously remarked, though I was waiting on 'em now, I should be able to come with a rush at dinner-time.

Breakfast over, a general move was made, and in due course of time we arrived at Sandown. Our match, I found, was the third event on the card, so that I had not long to wait. I found the fair owner of Fatima in a frantic state of excitement. Heaven only knows for how many pairs of gloves she had backed her favourite; and besides that, she had invested a whole fifty pounds on the mare. 'So that you *must* win, Mr. Muffe. If you were to dream of losing I should never hold up my head again.'

'And if I win, dear Miss Lightfoot—Laura,—let me call you Laura,' whispered I in trembling accents—(I had weighed out, and we were making our way to the paddocks)—'may I venture to hope—'

'Oh! don't talk nonsense now, Marmaduke—Mr. Muffe, I mean—*please* don't! I can't think of anything but the race just at present. *Wait till afterwards*—until you've won!'

I could have hugged her on the spot, and I vowed in my wicked heart that win I would, somehow or another. To think that I had won her—*her*, was almost more than I could stand, and my brain was in such a whirl that I scarcely seemed to know what I was about.

A slap on the back from Bob Lovel, accompanied by 'Look sharp, old chap! Famish is up already on Sentry-Go, and is leaving the paddock!' brought me to myself, and in another minute I had divested myself of my overcoat, and in all the glory of a brand new amber-coloured jacket and cap was seated on the back of the renowned Fatima. With the trainer on one side, and my mistress and her friends on the other, all giving advice at once, I think I may say that by the time I got on to the race-course I felt rather confused. I remember that I had turned the mare's head with a view to cantering in the wrong direction, had it not been for a friendly mounted policeman with 'T'other way, if you please, Sir.'

I then went after Famish, and that worthy, turning round to canter before I was aware (I was admiring my boots *en profile*), I was all but charged into by him and upset. As it was, I had to thank my mare's quickness in getting out of the way in time.

I then turned round and cantered past the stand in my turn; the mare, who by this time was very excited, nearly pulling me out of the saddle, and rasping my unfortunate hands most dreadfully against her withers. With great difficulty I pulled

her up, and the trainer coming to the rescue we managed to reach the starting-point in safety. Another second and down went the flag and we were off—so was my cap.

Talk about making a waiting-race of it! Fatima very soon dispelled that notion, for, taking the bit in her teeth, she bore me quickly to the front, and very soon Captain Famish and Sentry-Go were lengths behind. Hang it, thought I, as we careered past the stand the first time round; I don't believe he'll ever catch us. Alas for my hopes! Pace *will* tell! Fatima is surely going short—she no longer pulls. I venture to look over my shoulder for an instant, and, to my horror, perceive that the Captain, hugging the rails close, is rapidly coming up hand over hand. As we turn the corner into the straight he is nearly level; another second, and he *is* level. If the pace is telling on Fatima, the weight is doing the same to old Sentry-Go, for I can see he is quite as beat as the mare, so that it is now merely a question of horsemanship and stamina.

And now a sudden and artful thought crosses my brain. All's fair in love and war. The Captain is next the rails, as close as can be; why shouldn't I hem him in still closer, so that he won't be able to finish? What an idea! Why, my gallant ancestor is not to be mentioned in the same breath with *me*! I act upon it at once. Getting well hold of the mare, I bring her up close to the Captain until my knee actually touches his. I regret to say his language is unparliamentary, not to say coarse.

'Where the blankety blank are you coming to? you blankety idiot!' he yells.

But not a bit of notice do I take. The mare, I can feel, is quicker on her legs than the horse, and, bar accidents, I *must* win; for the Captain who, by-the-by, is now laughing fit to kill himself, not only can't use his whip, but has all his work cut out to avoid being thrown over the rails.

Another second and I—have won, amidst the uproarious shouts of the occupants of the stand and carriages. Never was such a joke, apparently, judging by the way they all laugh.

Bob Lovel was the first of my friends to receive me, splitting with laughter, though for my part I saw nothing to laugh at.

'Well, of all the bits of foul riding I ever saw, that of yours beats 'em all,' said he. 'Why, you deserve to be "warned off" for life, you old scamp! I only hope Famish won't object, for Miss Lightfoot's sake: you'll lose as sure as a gun if he does.'



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Some of 'em are at him now, asking him not to ; and, as he's a very good sort, perhaps he won't.'

To wind up my story, Famish proved the good fellow they said he was, and refused to object, to the intense indignation of the backers of Sentry-Go, when he heard how cut up the fair Laura would be. 'She was a nice little gal,' he said, 'and he wouldn't hurt her feelings for anything ; though it *was* rather aggravating,' he added, 'being done out of a race by such a tarnation muff as that' (meaning me). As for the fair owner of Fatima, she had no idea that I had ridden in any but the orthodox style, and thought, indeed, that my style of finishing was *lovely*. 'I shrugged up my shoulders,' she said, 'exactly like the renowned Fred Archer.'

'Yes,' chimed in the irrepressible Bob Lovel, who had overheard the remark ; 'our friend's finishing does remind me a good deal of the Tinman's, especially the way in which he spurred the mare in the shoulder. Eh, Marmaduke?'

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'And now,' said I, when, having changed my racing get-up, I joined my love in the paddock once more, 'Miss Lightfoot—Laura—remember your promise——'

'Something about marrying, was it not?' said she, interrupting me with a smile.

'Y-e-e-s,' replied I, in faltering accents.

'Well, then, listen to me, Sir. If you had not have won this race for me I intended never to speak to you again ; but you *have* won, Marmaduke' (she little knows how though, thought I), 'and I am the happiest girl in England at the present moment. One good turn deserves another, Marmaduke, so that you may——'

'Yes! Go on, Laura. May *what*?'

'Don't be in such a hurry, Sir, or I won't tell you. Well, I won't keep you in suspense any longer : you may consider yourself engaged in the Great Matrimonial Stakes.'

'Do you *really* mean it? And when is the event to come off?' said I, nearly choked with delight.

And Laura replied demurely,—

'Ask Mamma.'

A SAIL ON A RAILROAD.

By 'WILF POCKLINGTON.'

HAVE a friend who is probably the greatest inventive crank in America, and although this is saying a great deal, it is nevertheless not far from the truth.

This last winter I was spending some weeks with him at Poughkeepsie, occupying most of our time with ice yachting, which is the staple amusement of the place; and by means of a very superior boat, with a number of labour-saving appliances designed by himself, to enable us to carry less weight, we distanced all competitors, and won the winter cup. This stimulated his active mind to further exertions, with the following result.

We were sitting in the luxuriously furnished clubhouse of the Poughkeepsie Ice-Yacht Club, conversing upon various topics, among others being the Danish method of combining sail power with skates. Being thoroughly and practically conversant with the sport, I had been fully describing it, drawing at the same time a rough diagram on a piece of paper to illustrate my meaning. When I had finished, my friend put the paper into his pocket-book, saying, reflectively, 'I'll look into this; it sounds feasible;' and, another subject arising, it was speedily forgotten. The next day I left Poughkeepsie, returning to New York, thinking no more either of the skate sail or my friend's remark.

After the lapse of a few weeks I received this reminder:—

'MILWAUKEE.

'DEAR FRIEND,—If you can spare me a few days (and I know you can if you will), run over and see me. I have a pair of sail skates that will astonish you.

Yours very truly, A. S. M.'

I replied I would be there the following week; and in due time I arrived. Imagine my surprise when I learned that our proposed sail journey was a run upon the railway tracks.

My friend had puzzled over the sail-skate question until the ice had disappeared, and his mercurial temperament not per-

mitting him to wait until another year, he had conceived the notion of using rollers instead of skate-blades ; and, finally, the idea of using the ready-laid track of the railroad had presented itself.

The skates, if I may call them so, were made of a broad piece of wood several inches thick, fitted at the bottom with two small wheels, which ran upon the under edges of the rail, and one larger wheel, which revolved upon its surface. The wooden footholds of the skates were sloped inwards, allowing one of moderate stature to stretch the comparatively narrow gauge with ease. The feet were firmly buckled on to these, the same as for skating. To keep one from falling there were two light bars of iron adjusted to the back. One extended to the rails on the right side, and fitted the same way as the skates, being clamped to the rails by means of a spring hinge, by which one of the small wheels was shut into place. The other extended from the left side to the rail, and clamped it in the same way ; a rod stretching across the track connected the two, and thus prevented one from falling either forward or sidewise.

The sail fitted like the Danish sail on an X-shaped frame, which was placed upon the back, extending some inches above the head and to within a few inches of the feet, being about three feet in width, and attached to the elbows by means of a strong loop on each side, and connected also with the rods running upon the track behind ; the sail being worked from left to right by the elbows when it was necessary to *set* the sail for a side-wind. Altogether, it was the most extraordinary outfit I ever saw, yet perfectly rational and practicable. I grasped the idea as soon as it was shown to me, and was at fever-heat to try it.

The time-tables showed us that 9 a.m. was the best time to secure a clear track, and, after waiting two days for a favourable northerly wind, the third morning saw us proceeding along the track, carrying between us a large bundle swung on a pole.

I imagine every one we met thought we were going fishing in the Lake, for we were neither stopped or in any way questioned ; but, then, strangers perambulate the railroads in all directions in America, without being turned off as in England. Reaching a point about a mile from Milwaukee we got everything ready for a start, waited for the express to go thundering past, and then slipped our running-gear on to the rails, strapped

our feet tightly on to the blocks, and as my friend said 'Go!' hoisted our sails and away we went.

The wind caught the sails immediately, and we moved along, at first steadily, then faster and faster still, until we must have been running a good ten miles an hour. People rushed out of the few widely scattered houses to cheer us, dogs barked, and a coloured man with a team at a crossing jumped with affright, and nearly turned white, at the sight of 'two debbils a sailin' on dem tracks.'

Harder and harder blew the fierce north wind—we were out of the shade of the embankments now, and felt the full force as it swept across the vast lake; our novel machines now literally flew along, like enchanted sprites. In many places our speed was *over* twenty miles an hour. On! on! we sped, with never a thought of taking in a reef; the *delirium of pace*, that sweetest of all intoxicants, had seized us, and what sportsman is there who does not understand what that means, or who would not succumb to its fascination?

We rushed through the dépôt at Racine, narrowly escaping a train that was being switched. The station-master shouted, but we were gone, like a flash of lightning, before his words reached us. On! on! like the mad ride of Herne the Hunter, it seemed but a breathing-space to Kenosha, and a few more from there to Waukegan; the pine and hemlock-trees studded the great rolling hills on our right, and on the left lay the broad bosom of Lake Michigan, its deep green waters glistening like an emerald in the morning sun; the reports of a hoarse gun from time to time told of attack upon its fowl; here and there was to be seen a white or brown sail speckling its far-reaching waters, but seen only for a few minutes as we flew past the places where the track approached the lake shore.

A shrill whistle, and the deep booming of a locomotive-bell, pulled by no feeble hand, now attracted us. We turned our eyes ahead, and beheld the Chicago early express coming rattling along at forty miles an hour. We waved our caps, 'All right!' Heads came out of the coaches as we passed, and as the eyes belonging to them caught sight of the little silk flags of England and America at the peak of our sails a ringing cheer went up, and in a moment the rattle of the cars had died away.

Away! away! rushing over the small creek bridges like a bird, without seeing half of them; through patches of hemlocks

that grew on either side of the track, where our momentum decreased for a few seconds, just enough to let one catch the sweet balsamic odour of the opening buds—just long enough for the shade to fall on our sails, and make us look like white ghosts stealing along the historic shores once owned by the red man and the wild deer ; then out again into the fierce light of the sun, which rose higher and higher above our head ; out into the strong wind, which came sweeping around the corners of the wood as though waiting for us, catching our sails with redoubled force, and shaking them as in joy at having caught us unexpectedly.

No matter how the track curved, we trimmed our sails to left or right, and coasted round it as merrily as though impelled by steam power. Every now and again we passed a lumbering freight, or a more lively passenger-train, the occupants of which stared in amazement at us. At last, far off in the distance, loomed a city.

‘Chicago!’ shouted my friend. ‘Get ready to lower your sail.’

I obeyed, and just as we ran into the environs down came the sails ; slower and slower we ran, until at last we came to a standstill.

‘Time, three hours forty-five minutes ! Distance, eighty odd miles ! What do you think of it ?’

‘Greatest thing you have done yet, old man,’ was my reply.

When we came to unhitch we found the oil reservoir was exhausted, and that the running-gear of both machines was nearly red hot. We let it cool off, then packed up our traps, and took a cab to the Palmer House for a day’s good rest, which, as can easily be imagined, we needed. Interviewers were plentiful, and newspapers were soon full of the ride. Next day we returned home on the cars, and the two national ensigns are now amongst the proudest trophies in my friend’s collection.

THE AULD FISHER'S JUBILEE SONG.

By T. DYKES.

IM only an auld dune fisher, I scarce can hear my reel;
 And though the fish I canna see I aye can hook them weel.
 That fifty years hae come an' gane—I think it canna be—
 Since when I drank our young Queen's health when fishin' in the Dee.

Wha bleezed the bonfires up that nicht, they hae lang, lang grown cauld,
 And I am left alane of a', puir, weary, dune, and auld.
 Wha danced fu' licht upon that nicht I am the last that's spared,
 Wha cleekit weel in Royal reel lie still in the Craithie yaird.

It's fifty years Craigowan tap's been happit up in snaw,
 Full fifty years upon Braemar I've heard the grouse-cock craw;
 And fifty years the saumont has gane up and down to sea,
 And I am yet an auld fisher that thraws my line on Dee.

Noo guid folks a' the world ower will ca' you best o' Queens,
 But we'll say mair upon Deeside—we'll ca' you best o' freens.
 It's forty years you've dwelt wi' us, the best o' neebors ye,
 Wha will say nay Balmoral way? He should be droon'd in Dee.

It's monie a gran', gran' gift ye'll get frae every lass and chiel,
 The best that I can offer ye is *the* pick o' my creel.
 If gifts are wechted as they should alang wi' heerts that gie,
 I winna fear to turn the scales wi' my plump fish frae Dee.

REMINISCENCES OF A RIFLE IN
'THE ROCKIES.'*By 'TRIVIATOR.'*

IT shows how little of a sportsman was my Lord Byron (who, however, had a fine appreciation of the art of self-defence, in other words, of boxing), that in the famous catalogue he drew up for all time of the sweets of existence, no place is found for the rapture and triumph, the glory and the glow, of early sporting achievements, and more especially of the delights of the first-fruits of successful enterprise in the world of sport. Like Moore, he is

ever harping on the old, old story, and the refrain of both poets may be given in the words of the former :—

‘Oh, there’s nothing half so sweet in life
As Love’s young dream!’

And no one will attempt to dispute the supremacy of ‘the Master Passion;’ and, least of all, such of us as spent long hours in mastering the Sophoclean chorus that begins—

ἔρως ἀνίκασε μάχαν.

for we all in our turn—be it early or be it late in life—have to do homage at the shrine of the omnipotent archer. But we maintain that there may be rapture even for a misogynist, and a thrill of ecstasy and a pricking of the pulses unconnected with ‘the light that lies in woman’s eyes,’ which, adds the bard,

‘Has been my heart’s undoing.’

Who can gauge the excitement and ecstasy that come to him who has, unaided and alone, landed a clean-run salmon for the *first* time? the thrill of pleasure to the lad (or lass) who has ridden his pony or colt really well to hounds in a good quick thing, and has been handed the brush of bravery by the Master, whom he had absolutely beaten for place?

The first spear in pig-sticking is a life-long glory; nay, the *first* right-and-left shot in covert or in the open will haunt the memory for years, and always pleasantly: but even a higher level is attained when the first tiger, the first grizzly, the first *ovis ammon*, nay, even the first ‘blacktail,’ or antelope, has fallen a victim to your correctness of eye, and strength and steadiness of nerve! Let others tell of their first elephant, lion, tiger, or rhinoceros, and their exploits ‘in the land of the East and the clime of the sun,’ my theme is a very modest one, an everyday matter in the latitude of the Rocky Mountains, and it deals only with an antelope buck and a wapiti, but they were veritable triumphs at the time; nor do I think that the killing of the muckliest stag that had ever browsed on Ben Quoich or Ben More could have given me more satisfaction and pride.

And now let us go back a couple of decades, or a trifle more. At that epoch Ulysses Grant had not convinced the American world that he was ‘the only General.’ The South had not quite collapsed, and ’twere needless to say ‘Society,’ or the social system of the States, was in what Mrs. Malaprop (indeed, if I recollect right, it was Mr. Malaprop) would call a state of chowse (chaos).

The father was divided against the son and the son against the father, and even lovely woman—the peacemaker—became for the time being the bitterest of partisans! Life was not too pleasant under these circumstances in the great theatre of war, which really extended over the greater part of an entire continent; so, bidding the East a long farewell, I set out

‘For the West, for the West, for the land of the Free,
Where the mighty Missouri rolls on to the sea;’

intending, indeed, to visit ‘the head-waters’ of that mighty river, but was prevented from carrying out my purpose by the grounding of the steamer on a sandbar that was to carry Cæsar and his saddle-bags.

There is one blessing in the United States, that, unlike the politician whose three courses are axiomatic, the traveller and settler has hundreds of avenues open to his enterprise: of course, he may not hit upon the right one, but the *embarras du choix* is there, and mine was to ally myself with the pioneers of the place, push across the Plains of Kansas and Nebraska, shoot as many prairie chickens as you could *en route*, with a few buffalo, antelope, and ‘blacktail’ thrown in, and then gain those ‘Parks’ where the angler, the trapper, and the rifleman, may find the happy haven he has been looking for for years; for oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,

‘It is this! it is this!’

In those pre-Pacific Railway days, recollect, there were but two recognised ways of crossing the Plains—in the old lumbering ‘stages,’ drawn by six mules at about six miles an hour, and the humbler waggon and team, which you might buy or charter. ‘The Plains’ would disappoint a far less fastidious traveller than the ‘used-up Sir Charles Coldstream:’ not that there is nothing in them; on the contrary, there is a vast deal, but with square acres by the million the fur and feather are not so very easy to come at, *moyennant* always the prairie hens, who are as numerous as partridges in Norfolk. Buffaloes were to be met with there in thousands, but only on certain paths, which they affect as regularly as ducks do certain ‘flights;’ and the antelopes seem to prefer the distant to the near view of the lords of creation: nor could I find that it was of any use trying the experiment recommended by certain travellers, namely, planting your stick in the ground and tying a red kerchief upon

it when antelopes were in the neighbourhood, lying in ambush yourself till the boldest and bravest of the herd drew close up to the red rag and sniffed at it, while you were 'drawing your bead' upon the dappled darlings. To our experience the salt trick would have been almost equally efficacious. No, 'our crowd' had rather a tame time of it till we reached Colorado and Denver, and passing the Golden Gate made our way to that auriferous country, of which 'Central City' is the capital. We were not scalped by Indians, though one of our party was rather scared as two Sioux chiefs got him between their ponies and drew their bows and arrows, with seemingly murderous intent, because he had no tobacco to give them; nor were we poisoned by them, though we fancied once we ran a risk, as we picked up some fresh buffalo humps—a great delicacy—and ate them in fear and awe, thinking they might have been left as baits and traps; for, horrible as it may sound, such atrocities have been perpetrated on the Indians by *settlers*, and why shouldn't the Indians try to better the instruction?

No one has, I think, ever affirmed that the Sioux and the Arapahoes play polo; but if they don't, they might, for some of their ponies are perfect for the purpose in make, shape, and manners. I used one, and if he could not actually kill game for you he did all in his power to aid your stalk, gloried in your success, and identified himself with your sport in the most sympathetic fashion. The average horse you pick up on the outskirts of the Plains takes to 'hunting' very indifferently, and is apt to be as gun-shy as some few pointers and setters, and give you trouble at the most critical moments.

A hunter's outfit consists mainly of his rifles and ammunition, some pots, pans, and kettles, and coffee-mill, salt and soda, flour, bacon, and dried apples, lucifer matches, steel traps, fish-hooks, tomahawks, and some *metal* 'crockery,' if one may use the term; a Mexican saddle and a lariette, or hide-rope, with a steel peg attached to it, wherewithal to tether your mustang; some tanners' and curriers' tools, and, if possible, a spare horse to make a 'sumpter.' From Idaho, if I recollect right, we set forth into the gloom of pine-forests, and for two days the only game we met was a *jack* rabbit or two, and squirrels. Both made good stews, and helped us along till we got into the game country, and those happy valleys the Parks, which are about as big as some little German States in the old maps of Europe. Our *partie quarrée* was organized, not for sport or picnicing,

but as a 'Fur-and-Hide Company;' and I, an outsider and no hunter, was permitted as a favour to join in with them.

Our armoury consisted of *small-bore*, very *small-bore* rifles, and no shot-guns, which, in a country full of tree grouse, 'sage hens,' and wild fowl, was a great mistake in a culinary point of view. In addition to these arms of precision (more or less) I had purchased a Sharpe's repeating carbine, which carried a largish ball, and armed with this Lethal instrument I vowed I would have the skin of a grizzly or cinnamon bear ere I returned to the cities of commerce and civilisation. For this purpose I wandered about for weeks, and most fortunately (I now think) escaped a brush with Bruin, as I carried no revolver or bowie-knife and had no big dog with me; and though they say a wounded grizzly has been, ere now, terrified by the lighting of a lucifer match, the tale was not authenticated, and the circumstances might not be favourable for an essay in pyrotechnics on your furious foe. No! they said the bears had gone off to the bilberry and huckleberry beds; and though there were 'lots' of 'sign' and 'spoor' about, and I believe once I got close to one in a jungle, 'barfight' there was none. Meanwhile our hunters had trapped some beaver and our leader had found some 'blacktails,' a sort of large fallow deer, but I had contributed nothing to the commonwealth save an enormous appetite, and I felt that my *bear* hunts were looked upon generally as an imposition; myself as an impostor and a drone in the camp!

Now, my second string in the shape of rifles was one I had bought or trucked for with a professional hunter; it might have dated from the period of 'the last of the Mohicans,' and neither Joe Manton nor Lancaster would have owned it, nor even Birmingham have endorsed it. It was a revolving rifle in one sense, for it had three barrels; but they did not turn from the trigger like a 'Colt,' but to alter a discharge you had to turn the tube round with your left hand till it got into position. Nor was it a breech-loader; it was well rifled, however, and shot straight enough up to 150 or 180 yards. I was very anxious to contribute *something* to the company's store, but, beyond catching a sackfull of big red-fleshed trout, some of which we salted, I had done nothing, and 'played the gentleman.' So 'Sharpe' was hung up in camp—a wattled bough hut—and I set forth on my travels, armed with 'the revolver.' I had read of deer coming to 'the salt licks,' so I wandered to a river and

REMINISCENCES OF A RIFLE
IN 'THE ROCKIES'.



R. M. Alexander



soon came on 'a beaver town,' with big osier-trees hewed down as smoothly as even Mr. Gladstone could cut them ; dams made with stone walls, built as evenly as any in the Heythrop country, and the mud-roofed cabins inhabited by Mrs. Beaver and her cubs. Then I came to a glade among the maples, and, lo ! a hundred yards off was the biggest antelope I ever saw. It is possible he had never seen a white man before, for he was nowise put out, but made circles narrower each time, trotting with high action like a frightened or a terrified colt, till the last circle brought him within sixty yards. He was not going fast, and I thought I fired forward, but aimed a little too high and sent the ball through his neck. It staggered him only, giving me time to turn round the old weapon, when the second barrel sent him into the air, to fall prone and lifeless. Maybe I wasn't a proud man, but pride had several falls, and I recollect floundering into several beaver dams in my hurry to rush off to camp and get a horse to help to bring the spoil home. Antelope kidneys are not bad things, though the natives despise them. I think the last of the Monongahela whisky was quaffed on the occasion (I know our store was extremely small), and

' Let come what come may,
I, even I, had had my day.'

The next time the 'revolver' distinguished itself was a long way from that 'Beaver Castle' country. We had tracked a herd of elk in the snow into a sort of natural corral, and were looking at them from a height, when the herd smelt us and stampeded off into the pine-woods, breaking up seemingly into groups, and we thought all chances of a shot were gone ; so much so, that when an antelope was spotted within shot he was fired at by several barrels where he stood and was killed. In twenty minutes or so after we had dismissed the elk herd from our disappointed minds a goodly three-year-old buck cantered, or galloped rather, across a glade towards a hill. I sent a cartridge after him, though more as a *feu de joie* than with serious intent, and our folk thought me rather insane to waste powder on the chance, for the Western man never throws away a cartridge, and would not dream of *firing a running shot*. When we topped the hill the buck was stone dead, 'dropped in his tracks ;' the little bullet had ranged forward through the kidneys. He loaded two ponies.

‘WHO SAID RATS?’

By CUTHBERT BRADLEY.



GAME-LOOKING little fox-terrier, with even black-and-tan markings, trotted into my chambers on the dining-room floor of — Square, S.W. Not seeing a cat in the room to chivey, and discovering that I, the sole occupant, was not her master, she politely wagged her tail, and was about to retire ; but at that moment my landlady, with the breakfast-tray, entered the room, and seeing the terrier she proceeded to give tongue. ‘What are you doing here, you audacious puppy? How dare you come into this gentleman’s rooms?’

The terrier merely reeved her nose, and just showed the tips of a splendidly white set of ivories, but did not budge an inch. ‘Oh, never mind the terrier, Miss Reily!’ I said ; ‘I feel very much complimented that she should call on me!’

‘If I had my way I should lock him up in the coal-cellar!’ was her reply.

It was a trait in my worthy landlady’s character to call all dogs ‘he’ and all cats ‘she’ indiscriminately. As she could talk quite nineteen to the dozen, in less time than it takes to write, she informed me that the terrier belonged to a young gentleman, Mr. Quilter, who had her best rooms on the drawing-room floor above mine. ‘He keeps the terrier,’ she said, ‘to amuse hisself, as he is a bit of a sporting gent, and finds town very dull after the country.’ Then Miss Reily, quite unsolicited on my part, went on to inform me of Mr. Quilter’s mode of living. ‘When he goes out he takes and locks the terrier in his bedroom, so as I shall not get at it. Of course, it has torn his carpet into holes, and the tiresome little thing gets into his bed and gnaws his sheets and blankets most shameful ; it would take a clean counterpain a-day to make Mr. Quilter’s bedroom look at all respectable!’

‘She certainly looks like a good vermin-killer!’ I remarked —not that I implied anything against the sweetness or cleanliness of my landlady’s apartments. ‘At least, she looks as if she could make a rat sit up if it came in her way!’ I added, apologetically.

'Yes, indeed, in a respectable house like mine, which has always been let to high-class parties what can afford to pay 'andsome for their apartments, no one would have dared to have said rats till Mr. Quilter come!' At the mention of the word 'rats' the terrier dived under the sofa, and carried on a fruitless search round the room.

'It is very evident, Miss Reily, that the terrier is of the same mind as yourself, for you've quite disturbed her by saying rats!'

'Yes, indeed, and it was Mr. Quilter who first said rats in my house; he says to me, says he, "The rats in my bedroom at night, Miss Reily, is awful, and I am particular afraid of rats, Miss Reily; and unless I have a terrier to sleep in my bedroom I must give you notice, Miss Reily." Well, of course, I thought it was all ridiculous nonsense on his part to get over me, as I objected to the terrier at any price. But, would you believe it? this very morning, if you please! when our maid Mary Hann—who is but a little thing, though she comes of honest parents, though poor—when she takes up Mr. Quilter's breakfast, he sends down on the tray two—oh, such monster—rats! that the terrier, he said, killed under his bed in the night.'

'By Jove!' I said, 'with such a long pair of punishing jaws she would make very short work of any rat!' I must confess, though, that I could not help thinking that for length of jaw my landlady was second to none.

'Oh, the rats was too terrible to look at! and quite frightened our poor little maid Mary Hann! And here is me, a poor woman, paying five-and-forty pounds rent, besides rates and taxes, for a house that is infested with rats! Wouldn't you, if you was me, sir, acquaint the landlord, and make him reduce the rent?'

My landlady's interminable verbosity was here cut short by the fox-terrier raising its voice, and lustily yap-yapping, as it jumped on to a chair and looked out of the window; for outside, on the pavement, barking and yelping, were all the curs in the square—at least, there were six—with their noses in the air, looking up expectantly at the balcony of the drawing-room floor above.

There was a black retriever who was lame, and warped out of shape with rheumatism; a very big white (so called) fox-terrier, whom I should think nobody would pay the dog-tax for; a slim colley-dog who went on three legs, and had broken all his teeth

whilst retrieving stones for the urchins that played in the square; a black-and-tan hound, with two sides to its face, and a stern curled tight over its back; also two little nondescript dogs, which may be called 'yelpers.'

The period of which I am writing is, of course, before the hydrophobia scare, or the muzzling act.

Two great chunks of bread and meat were thrown to this concourse of dogs, and a cheery voice from the balcony above was heard. 'Good boys! worry, worry! Battle, old man! feel hungry this morning, eh?' All the dogs wagged their tails and licked their mouths, scrambling for the crumbs that came from the breakfast-table of the drawing-room floor. 'Oh, my goodness! did you ever see such shameful waste?' said my landlady, with horror, as she flipped my table-cloth off with a jerk; 'and by a young gentleman, too, that's so mighty particular that he won't eat salt butter.'

Quilter was now heard coming downstairs in search of his terrier. 'Nelly! Nelly, old girl! where are you?' Hearing her give tongue, he entered my room and apologised for the intrusion. Instinctively we discovered that each had a strong vein for sport, and that each were ardent devotees at the shrine of the goddess Diana—a goddess, by the way, who is very difficult to worship in the uncongenial atmosphere of the apartments of a London square.

Any sport in which a dog or a horse figures is sure to delight an Englishman, although it has been said that the road to his heart lies through his stomach. We don't believe it. Find out his favourite sport, and you at once have the key to his affections.

In a few minutes Quilter and I were firm friends, and at his suggestion we adjourned, with his terrier Nelly, to his rooms to smoke a cigarette.

Quilter's apartments were spacious, and showed by the faded gilt and chipped plaster that they had seen better days. Fashion had slipped away further west, and left our square high and dry, and lodging-house keepers, with their attractions in the shape of wax-fruits under glass-shades, highly-coloured daubs, and innumerable woollen mats and antimacassars, had here foregathered. In this particular lodging long French windows opened out on to the balcony, and folding-doors across the apartment divided it into a bed and sitting-room. So that, for a bachelor, the apartments were very complete.

'I see you have your gun in town as well as your dog,' I remarked to Quilter.

'Oh, yes,' said he; 'but it's only an air-gun!'

'Well, it's a handy-looking weapon. What are the advantages of an air-gun?'

'Well, you see, you can shoot all Sunday, and nobody will find you out!' Quilter then threw open his bedroom-door, which made a range of about a dozen yards or so. Hung over his bed-head was a small target, the wall around looking decidedly chippy.

'I should think that shooting at the walls must bring down the plaster!' I remarked, as I took deadly aim at the target, and missed it by a foot.

'Oh, it does,' replied Quilter, candidly; but you can always sweep it up, you know.'

'One would think that this room was quite a covert for game from the way your terrier is pointing!' The terrier was standing quivering with excitement as she fixed the coal-box.

'Yes,' he replied; 'I had some rats in that coal-box last night, and she scents them.'

'Our landlady has only just been telling me that your rooms were infested with rats, and that you keep the dog for protection!'

'No! really! did she though?' and Quilter went off into a fit of laughter. 'I had no idea I had succeeded so cleverly in hoodwinking the old girl!'

'She most certainly told me of two monster rats!'

'So they were, beauties!' said Quilter, with much satisfaction; 'sewer bred. Cost me sixpence apiece, and well worth it!'

He then went on to explain, that as his poor little terrier-bitch was looking so awfully dull he had bought her some rats to give her a little sport and cheer her up.

It has been said that one half of the world never knows how the other half lives; and until Quilter enlightened me on the subject I had no idea that rat-catching was such a lucrative business. Some of the London sewer-men are credited with making five pounds a-week by catching the rats which swarm underground. Living as they do in the sewers, the rats have very little fear of man, and are easily caught by the sewer-men. They are then taken to the dealers in the Seven Dials and elsewhere, kept in a strong iron room, fed on raw meat to make

them savage, and then retailed to the dog-fancying public at sixpence a-piece.

That same evening I received this note from Quilter:—'I shall be very glad if you will do me the honour to come to my rooms this evening, as I have just brought twelve of the whiskered vermin from Seven Dials, and I think I can show you sport.'

In due course I put in an appearance, and found my host very busily arranging his room—'making coverts,' he said, 'so as to give the rats a chance of showing sport.' In one corner of the drawing-room, under the fretwork bracket laden with spurious old china, he had arranged a plantation of empty bottles. The valance of the sofa was weighted with books, so as to allow ingress and egress at the two ends only. This Quilter thought would make a very appalling black forest wherewith to try the pluck of the terrier. There was a *cul-de-sac* under the fireplace, and the chance of escape, for a wary old rat, up the chimney.

'Where are the rats?' I said.

'Shut up in the coal-box, twelve of them. They were in three shot bags, but I shouldn't be surprised if they've gnawed their way out by this time, and are all loose—so look out!' said Quilter, laughing.

'Well, how can you possibly get one out at a time?' I asked.

'Oh, I shall upset the coal-box directly, and let them all out at once; it's better sport!'

'I am awfully sorry, old man,' I said, nervously, 'but I quite forgot that I had an appointment with a music-master this evening!'

But Quilter was too fully occupied to take any notice of my excuse to get away. He had seized the excited terrier and shut her up in his bedroom. 'Jump up on a chair,' he shouted to me, 'and look out! for it's deuced awkward if a rat runs up your trouser-leg!'

'A precious healthy sort of animal to get a bite from,' I groaned.

Before, however, I had time to think twice about it, Quilter had turned over the coal-box, and, with a 'Tally-ho! gone away!' twelve dark forms glided hither and thither over the carpet.

Those who have seen Mr. Irving's wonderful representation of the Brocken scene in *Faust* will be able to picture for them-

selves the effect these crawling monsters presented in the lamp-light on the carpet of the drawing-room.

Quilter and I were both stranded on chairs. He was the first to speak. 'Now,' he said, 'I intend to give these beggars ten minutes' law, so that they may crawl about and get used to the light and find the coverts. Then you can reach the handle of my bedroom-door from your chair and let the terrier in!'

What a long ten minutes it seemed. Quilter had given me a choice cigarette to smoke, but I should have enjoyed it just as much if I had been perched on a barrel of gunpowder. We heard the rats clinking round the bottle plantation, and they trooped into the dark wood under the sofa, for rats are very curious animals, and born explorers.

'Time!' shouted Quilter. 'Let the terrier in!' Turning the handle of the bedroom-door, the game little animal dashed into the middle of the room, eager for the fray.

'Rats! rats! hie, seek!' said Quilter, as he jumped from chair to chair as nimbly as a chamois-hunter, following up the line of his terrier. She forthwith plunged into the dark wood under the sofa, where a scuffle, followed by a rat-tat-too beaten on the boards, told us number one was corpsed.

'Tally ho! gone away!' and two big rats flew from the wood and made up the curtains; but the terrier now was busy in the bottle plantation, and, being a bit too keen, an old buck rat had her fast by the nose, which made her sing out.

At that moment the door opened, and Miss Reily stood aghast at the scene going forward in her best drawing-room.

'Look out, Miss Reily!' shouted Quilter, whose presence of mind never seemed to desert him, 'there's a horrid big rat come down the chimney, and we shall catch it directly!'

'Oh dear! oh dear, Mr. Quilter!'

'Look out! it's going to run up your petticoats, Miss Reily!'

The *ruse* was successful. Our landlady, with a shriek, disappeared before she had had time to take in the true state of affairs. When she was safely outside, Quilter went on to explain, through the keyhole, 'that a big rat had come down the chimney—a very big rat, the last of its tribe! But he could easily catch it for her, if she would go to number nineteen, over the way, and borrow that big tabby tom cat.' In the excitement of the moment, poor Miss Reily swallowed the story, and rushed off to try and borrow the cat from her neighbour over the way.

Counting up the slain, we found there were eleven; the twelfth must have escaped up the curtains or the chimney—anyhow, this was no time to hunt for him now.

'What on earth are you going to do now, Quilter?' I said. 'Directly she comes in with that cat, and sees eleven rats, she will know that what you have told her is all rubbish! and she'll sue you for damages!'

'I have a great mind to chuck ten of the rats out into the square—it's quite dark!'

'For any favour, don't!' I implored, for I knew that they would lie just outside my own windows. 'You know the Vestry carts won't be round to sweep them up till next Friday!'

'I know!' said Quilter, with sudden inspiration: 'I'll call a cab and drive off with them! Just help me to put ten of these corpses into this brown-paper bag.'

The ten rats were packed up, and one was left spread out on the table, with a note for our landlady when she returned. It was to this effect, 'that, after a desperate struggle, the terrier had killed the rat! and Mr. Quilter would be much obliged if Miss Reily would put his room straight again!'

Shouting out of the window, 'Hansom! hansom up!' brought a cab to the door, and in the shortest possible time we, with the terrier and the brown-paper parcel, were galloping off.

Through Sloane Square we went, along Eaton Square into Belgrave Square, when Quilter seized the brown-paper parcel of rats and flung it out of the cab.

The cabman pulled his horse up short, and through the trap-door said, 'I think you've dropped a parcel, sir!'

'How dare you pull up?' roared Quilter. 'I'll have your license taken away to-morrow, if you don't drive like the deuce!'

The dumbfounded cabman, noticing that it was a brown-paper parcel, and having read a great deal about dynamite scares, took the hint to get out of the neighbourhood as soon as possible.

Flogging up his horse, we were soon at Piccadilly Circus. An extra sixpence and a little friendly chaff effectually squared Cabby, who often drove Mr. Quilter. 'Lor, sir!' he said, touching his hat, 'if you had only said "Rats!" I should have knowed it was a lark!'

THE CHESTNUT PAIR.

By EVELINE MICHELL FARWELL.

CHAPTER I.



STANDING sixteen hands, with quarters which looked fit to lift her over anything, and legs clean and hard as bars of iron, there was not much fault to be found with the chestnut mare; she seemed a bit wild certainly, and obviously cherished a bitter hatred for one of Webb's stablemen, lashing out viciously whenever he came near her; but, as somebody once sagely remarked, 'The man who expects to ride a faultless horse deserves to walk.'

'Why don't you buy her, Douglas?' asked Bill Murray, as he and Captain Campbell left Webb's yard.

'Cash!' was the curt reply.

Bill whistled; it was not Captain Campbell's wont to be deterred from anything by the consideration of paying for it. Before there was time to realise the strangeness of the situation, his thoughts were diverted by his companion suddenly turning into a field-path, which led anywhere but to barracks.

'Where on earth are you going?' Bill cried.

'Up to the Manor House,' replied Captain Campbell. 'Beauchamp's got some Dachshund puppies I want to see. Are you coming?'

'No, thanks. I must drive out to Oldfield to-night, and have a heap of things to do first.'

'What's up there, I wonder?' Bill soliloquised, as Campbell jumped the stile, and started off uphill at five miles an hour; 'he surely can't be bitten in that quarter, although Miss Beauchamp is good-looking enough for anything, and well able to afford an expensive luxury like Douglas, if she fancied it. By Jove! fancy Douglas turning Benedict! Absurd!'

Captain Campbell, however, had no thoughts of the Châtelaine's *beaux yeux* as he proceeded to the Manor House; they might be, and they were, exceedingly beautiful, but neither they nor the twin pair glittering in her *cassette* were anything to him.

Norah Beauchamp and her brother had kept house together ever since she left school at seventeen. Both father and mother died when they were children, Sir Harry succeeding to the

baronetcy at thirteen; he was now about thirty, Norah seven years younger. They were devoted to each other, and to hunting, a taste they were well able to gratify, for 'their lines were cast' in a fine hunting country; the estate did not owe a halfpenny, all the farms were let, and Norah was mistress of her mother's sixty thousand pounds. A tempting bait this to a penniless soldier certainly; but Douglas Campbell never played to lose, and in this game he had a shrewd idea that a certain Jack Fitzgerald held all the trumps.

'Miss Beauchamp is out on the south front, sir,' said the butler.

'Thanks. I'll go there!'

On a bank to the left of the Italian garden, in which the south front was laid out, sat a slim girl with bright chestnut hair and dark-brown eyes, still further darkened by long black lashes. Three ginger-coloured Dachshund pups disported themselves round her, one devouring the embroidered edging of her white dress, another licking the varnish off a little pointed shoe, and the third making frantic, though futile, jumps at the mother, serenely reposing on her mistress's knee, and surveying her offspring with dignified disdain.

'How do you do, Miss Beauchamp? Sir Harry asked me to come up and see these pups of his one afternoon, but I hear he's out shooting to-day.'

'Yes, he has gone over to Elmhurst, and will not be home until late, I am sorry to say. You can examine the pups to your heart's content though,' continued Norah, as she laughingly held one up for his nearer inspection.

'They're uncommonly good ones,' said Captain Campbell, surveying them critically. 'This one's a perfect picture.'

'Yes—is he not? and he is so clever too; much sharper than the others. What is it, Wilson?' as the butler appeared on the scene. 'Tea? Oh, bring it out here! it's a shame to lose any of this glorious sunshine—we shall not have it much longer.'

'You won't regret that, will you, Miss Beauchamp? I thought it was only in "a southerly wind and a cloudy sky" that your soul delighted?'

Norah laughed. 'I'm afraid they are my chief joys. How horribly selfish hunting makes one! When the rest of the world is plunged in mud and misery, we are revelling in some real good thing.'

'Just as well for some one to enjoy it,' Douglas philosophi-

cally remarked. '*A propos*, do you know anything of Webb? I was down there this afternoon, just before I came here.'

'Oh! do tell me what he has. You see he's a new-comer, and we know little about him.'

'I'm afraid I can't enlighten you much as to the man' (very little strict truth about this statement, for Captain Campbell had done more than one good deal with him in Ireland); 'but as to horses, he has a real good chestnut mare—would carry you like a bird, if you did not find her too much of a handful. You rather like that sort of thing though, don't you?'

'Well, I do not care about sheep, or rocking-horses. I like an animal to let me know "he's there" occasionally. But tell me more about this vicious paragon.'

'Why not see her for yourself? Get Sir Harry to bring you down to Webb's to-morrow afternoon, and come on to tea in my rooms afterwards. Do! I want you to see my menagerie.'

'What! are you a sort of Jamrack?'

'Not quite; but I have a fox, a monkey, a parrot, two or three dogs, a horse or two, and a pony, who is about "the pick of the basket!"'

'What a motley crew! I *should* like to see them; but we cannot come to-morrow, I know. Will Thursday do?'

'Capitally; and I'll call in and tell Webb to have the chestnut ready for you to see.'

So it was settled, and Captain Campbell strolled homewards, not ill-pleased with his afternoon's work.

'Ten to one she buys her,' he reflected; 'thinks she can ride anything—they all do—but she will find the fair Helen a trifle too much for her, and be glad enough to swop for my bay, though she wouldn't look at him a month ago. I ought to make a good thing out of it. Sir Harry is as cracked about her jockeyship as she is. No doubt she will buy her, and, by Jove! won't she just sell or swop her as soon as she gets the chance!'

Thursday afternoon found Sir Harry, Miss Beauchamp, and Captain Campbell, in Webb's yard, Norah looking very fetching in a dark tailor gown, with indescribable flecks of colour about it.

Sir Harry, an odd little creature with a charming face, who always looked unfinished without his horse, was feeling the chestnut's legs critically; a proceeding which considerably disturbed her equanimity, although she was in a fairly good temper, for *her*.

'Take her over the hurdles, Tom,' said Webb, after Sir Harry had completed his examination.

This, however, was easier said than done. Sidling this way and that, resenting any touch of the heel by a terrific buck jump, which taxed Tom's adhesive powers to the utmost, her ladyship seemed to have no idea of larking. All of a sudden up went her head, and with a rush she flashed over the hurdles, a fair fence with a ditch on the take-off side, a bit of water, and the swing-gate, in brilliant style.

'She'll do,' Norah whispered in Sir Harry's ear. He nodded, and they fell to dealing.

Never was host more genial than Captain Campbell that afternoon. Declaring that they must have had enough of horse-flesh for the present, he insisted on a grand review of tea and muffins before inspecting the stables and menagerie. The pony was, as his master had said, the 'pick of the basket,' and next to him stood a showy bay, with a coat like satin, but rather light in the back ribs, and a little long in the pasterns: that, however, no woman would notice, thought Douglas. This was the animal he had wanted Norah to buy.

'Carry you well, Miss Beauchamp; he's a beautiful mover. I should like you to try him some day. If you hadn't fallen in love with the fair Helen, I'm not at all sure that Grasshopper wouldn't have suited you, although you didn't quite fancy him at first; he's more of a lady's horse than the mare.'

'I should never lack a looking-glass certainly,' laughed Norah; 'his neck is as good a mirror as I could ever wish for!'

'Well, let me be your escort when you try Lady Helen,' Campbell suggested. 'Grasshopper shall duly hold the glass to you, and you will see yourself and the chestnut *à merveille*. When will you try the mare? Seriously, I wish you'd let me come too; I know you are above all aid, but I *should* like to look on.'

'No, thanks, I do my horsebreaking strictly in private.'

In vain did Douglas try to reverse this decision; and when Sir Harry and his sister departed, they left an irritated host determined that he would see Lady Helen tried somehow.

CHAPTER II.

A grey cloudy morning, a likely-looking gorse, as good a pack of hounds as you would wish to ride to, and a far bigger field than *will* ride to them.

Miss Beauchamp has brought Lady Helen out at last. In vain has Captain Campbell schemed for a sight of her morning gallops; not only is Norah herself adamant, but her groom is steeled against all persuasion. At the opening meet Captain Campbell's confidence had received a shock when he marked the light firm touch of Norah's slender hands, held low on the withers, and noted the resolute way she picked her own place and stuck to it. In common with many others of his sex, Captain Campbell had a very poor opinion of a woman's horsemanship, and was wont to remark, 'You put them on perfect hunters, and rave about their riding because they manage not to tumble off at the first fence.' He had been absolutely confident that Miss Beauchamp would be thankful to swop the capricious Helen for his gentle bay, although his first attempt to sell her that animal had met with no encouragement. Douglas knew well enough that the horse was not worth half what Lady Helen was, but he did not believe in Norah's knowing anything about it; and as for Sir Harry, who, despite his perfect confidence in his sister, was apt to be a trifle nervous about her neck, he fully trusted that the chestnut's vagaries would make him urge Norah to swop.

'She can't be much over eight stone,' he reflected, 'and he'll carry her right enough; but he's about done for my work: one hard day would finish him, I'm afraid. I *must* have that mare; she'd be safe to win a lot of chases, and I don't see why I shouldn't. That girl will never be able to ride her, and if she fails no one else will try. Her reputation will help me there. She *does* ride uncommonly well though, confound her!'

On this particular morning Norah and her chestnut had attracted a considerable amount of attention. Lady Helen was behaving wonderfully well, but was distinctly fidgety. Every one had been eager to see Miss Beauchamp's new purchase, and Captain Campbell's were not the only eyes which followed the chestnut's every movement.

'I almost believe there's something in all that rot about a woman's hand after all,' Douglas muttered under his moustache; 'but, hang it! she can't hold her when once they break cover. Not one of Webb's boys could ride her except Tom, and he'd stick to the fiend, bare back!'

Norah meantime seems to be bestowing most of her attention on a slight, quiet-looking, fair man, on a grey with a ewe neck. 'For which I offer up daily thanksgivings,' his master used to say

'If it hadn't been for that, he'd never have been in my stable; and I should have been out of a quick thing or two;' and, indeed,

'Fierce as the fire, and fleet as the wind,
There was nothing he couldn't climb or clear.'

Jack Fitzgerald, for it is he, greatly admires the chestnut. 'She's the right stamp,' he says, 'and would go in any country.'

'Yes,' says Norah, 'I think she would; but I want her to go especially well to-day. Would it bore you horribly to pilot me?'

'Do you mean it?' answered Jack, flushing. By Jove! won't we show them the way?'

The idea is evidently too much for Lady Helen; she gives a gigantic buck, which Norah heeds so little as to prove her well prepared for it.

'Not much question about her jumping, is there?' she laughs. Then adds, low and seriously, with a vexed little frown between her eyebrows, 'Just look at Captain Campbell! he is eyeing me as if he were a cat and I a mouse! Do you know I believe he would love to see me bucked off? for, although he told me about Lady Helen, he has done nothing but harp upon her bad qualities ever since, and his bay's good ones. That showy, used-up beast he wanted me to buy, you know.'

Jack nodded. 'Wants you to swop, I expect,' he says. 'I know him!'

'Oh, he *can't*—but listen! Ah!'

A few preliminary whimpers break into full chorus. Scarce had they gathered up their reins than they heard the 'Gone away!' Up went Lady Helen's head as she plunged wildly forward, but she knew Norah's voice and touch by this time; and before Jack had led the way over a nice little fly she was fairly in hand. Away they went at a cracking pace over half-a-dozen grass-fields, separated by nothing very formidable. Jack and Norah to the right of the hounds, nearly abreast of them, while Captain Campbell, Sir Harry, and half-a-dozen others, who had been lucky enough to get a good start, look as if they intended keeping it. Lady Helen is now going as kindly as possible, sailing along with the low sweeping stride which makes those unused to thoroughbreds feel as if they were sinking through the ground. She takes everything that comes in her way; but, so far, she has not been very highly tried. Suddenly hounds turn, ever so slightly, but it is in our friends' direction, and Jack is quick to profit by it. Jumping in and



J. M. H. 1877

Jack is over, and turns
in his saddle

see page 147.

out of a narrow lane, they are in the same field as the hounds ; certainly if ever they meant it, they mean it to-day. They rattle through a little covert, which presents a tremendous yawning ditch, and a deep drop as the only outlet anywhere near. Poor Jack ! he looks wistfully at the hounds streaming up the plough.

'There's a gate at the far end,' he says, turning the grey's astonished head.

'A gate !' says Norah, scornfully. 'If she can't clear *that* she is of no use to me.'

Jack is over, and turns in his saddle just in time to see Lady Helen land, light as a feather, by his side.

'Well done !' he says, enthusiastically. 'I didn't half like it.'

'Then why did you look ? It was very stupid,' retorts Norah, riding up the furrow ; 'if I had come down you would have had to stop and pick me up.'

'*Had* to stop ! Good Heavens !—do you suppose I should ever have forgiven myself if anything had happened ? Don't you know —— ?'

'Well,' Norah interrupts, 'can't we push on a bit now ?'

'Not much good here, scent seems rather cold. By Jove ! though, old Mermaid's hit it !'

Away they go, Douglas Campbell and two other men in a grass-field to the left, a few yards behind them. Sir Harry is not to be seen, but,

'No time to pause, for over the meads

They swept, with a scent breast high.'

A stiff post and rails cross the next field. Douglas's black, the grey, and the chestnut, get over with never a rap, but one red coat comes a regular crumpler, while the other makes a hole big enough to let through a far larger field than is now left. A couple of easy fences, a low stone wall, and hounds break from scent to view. In another moment Reynard dies gamely in the open, and Norah begins to wonder where Sir Harry is.

'Jogging homeward,' says some one who has just come up ; 'his horse dropped his hind legs in that beastly place, and strained himself a bit.'

'Is Harry hurt ?'

'Oh, dear, no ! not a bit. But he said he didn't think we should do much more, so he'd just find Merriden, change horses, and get home.'

'Thanks, so much,' said Norah. 'I think I'll go home too. Surely you're not coming yet, Mr. Fitzgerald?' she adds, as Jack ranged alongside.

'Yes, I think Grey Friar has done about enough, as I shall want him out again on Saturday. One run like that is good enough for me.' With Norah to ride home with *bien entendu*. Ah, well! these glorious dull November mornings will end in dull November evenings, when 'the way is long and dreary, for a score of miles before us lies, and man and horse are weary.' Just as well, therefore, to get home betimes, especially when our heart's desire leads the way.

As they jog off, Douglas Campbell looks after them with something like a suppressed scowl.

'Did you see that?' said Norah. 'Don't Captain Campbell look vicious? That black of his hadn't much the heels of Lady Helen to-day, although he fancies him so.'

'He has good reason to fancy him too,' Jack replied; 'but judging by the way she went to-day, the chestnut would be hard to beat anywhere. What a pity you can't enter her for the Brunton Cup! Campbell's going to run the black, and you might make a match of it.'

'How I wish I could!' Norah exclaims; then added, as a sudden thought struck her, 'Why *shouldn't* Lady Helen run? she'll be fully qualified. If only I can find any one to ride her! Harry's good for most things, but his hands aren't light enough for this animal. I wish'—she stopped—then, 'I suppose you'll enter Grey Friar, won't you?'

Jack grasped the situation. 'Oh, dear no! daren't risk him' (an awful crammer, as until that instant the grey had been as determinately destined for the Brunton Cup as man's resolution could make him; but, then, what man resolves woman so often dissolves). 'Would you trust Lady Helen to me, Miss Beauchamp? I'd do my best for her.'

'You! Oh! would you? I *did* so want to ask you, only I didn't like. Now we *will* beat the black. Are you sure you mean it, and don't mind?'

'Mind! As if there were anything I wouldn't like to do for you; and to ride Lady Helen would be a treat any day. It's awfully good of you to trust her to me.'

'Is it? I don't know—I think it's good of you; and—I don't think you're altogether untrustworthy.'

'Don't you? Well, I don't think you'll find me so, anyhow.'

If I don't carry your colours first past the winning-post some one will be the worse for it.'

He says this with a sort of semi-fierceness, which startles Norah.

'Don't!' she interrupts impetuously. 'You shan't ride unless you promise me you will—to—to—that is—to take proper care of your neck and Lady Helen's,' she ends up tamely.

If 'he who hesitates is lost,' she who does likewise is absolutely done for.

'Norah, my darling!' Jack bursts out, 'you don't mean to say you care a fig whether I'm smashed up or not? You know—at least, I suppose you do—that if you won't be my leader, I'll go in single harness all my days. You don't know, and I don't believe you ever will, how much I care for you; but don't you think you might give me a trial?'

'I—I don't know. You see I like single harness; I'm used to it. We mightn't pull together.'

'As if any one could pull against you! I know I'm a bit of a handful sometimes, but it's soon over, and you don't mind a bit of temper. It's not that. If you don't like me, say so.'

Norah is cornered. 'I don't—dislike you.'

'Do you like me?'

'Ye—es.'

'Much?'

Pause—then another faint 'Yes.'

'Then why on earth can't you like me more?'

'I—don't know,' says Norah meekly, utterly taken aback by this furious onslaught. 'Perhaps—I might if—if you don't hurry me,' she adds hastily, as Jack shows signs of taking everything for granted.

'Hurry you!' he says indignantly; 'as if you hadn't known it all for months! What a brute I am, though! I can't help it, Norah darling. I hate waiting about; looking at a fence is the very devil, however good the grass may be on the other side.'

'Hulloa!' comes Sir Harry's voice; and turning quickly they see him cantering across some fields to their left.

'Confound it!' mutters Jack. 'Norah, for Heaven's sake, say something!'

Sir Harry's approach gives Norah courage. 'Ride Lady Helen for me, and then—why, if you win with one chestnut, I don't see why you shouldn't with another,' she whispers hurriedly.

'Beastly bad luck getting into a place like that,' says Sir

Harry, coming up. 'Her ladyship's done well by you to-day, Norah.'

So they fall to hunting talk, but Sir Harry finds Fitzgerald a trifle dull. No wonder, when he is meditating on the points of two chestnuts, both with somewhat wayward wills. They are quiet enough now, though. Lady Helen goes along springily, but gently as possible, and her mistress is very silent; so Jack feasts his eyes, unchecked by word or look, on chestnut plaits still neat and shipshape, and on a dainty figure, in a habit which thoroughly knows its place.

CHAPTER III.

'WHAT a perfect morning!' every one is saying on the day of the Brunton Cup—and it certainly is. Warm and bright as April days can be, but so seldom are. Everything is looking its best when Sir Harry's coach draws up on the course. Jack Fitzgerald is next Norah: there is no absolute engagement between them as yet, for Miss Beauchamp steadily declines to discuss the matter till the Brunton Cup is lost or won. To tell the truth, she is very loth to leave her brother, and sometimes thinks she can't do it; but then—could she give up Jack? To-day she begins to fear he is dearer than she thought. She is horribly nervous, and although she stoutly declares to herself that it is all because of Lady Helen, that hardly accounts for her inability to bear Jack out of her sight. It is dreadfully hard to take any interest in the earlier races. She scarcely eats any luncheon; and when the race preceding the Cup is over she goes to the Paddock with Jack, Sir Harry, and most of their contingent, to see Lady Helen. She is too cold and miserable to speak; nor are her fears altogether unreasonable. True, Jack is a consummate horseman, and she knows it; but she also knows how steeplechasing rouses the most dormant devils in equine nature—and those possessing Lady Helen are anything but drowsy. They dare not bring her into the ring, so Norah's visit is to the stable. As they cross the Paddock they pass close to Captain Campbell, who, with some other officers, is scrutinising the black and his opponents.

'You'll be hard to beat, Douglas,' says one of them; 'not much here to bother you.'

'The chestnut's not out,' says Bill Murray; 'it will be pretty well a match between her and the black. Who rides her?'

'Fitzgerald, d—n him!' says Campbell, savagely.

'What! Jack? You've got your work cut out then, after all.'

He had, and he knew it. That Jack was bad to beat no one who had seen him ride to hounds could doubt. 'What! that quiet fellow?' people were wont to say incredulously, when he was pointed out to them. 'Ah, well! just wait a bit,' would be the answer. 'You mayn't notice him much at first, but if we've anything like a run you'll see some one stealing away from us all, and that will be Jack. Nothing stops him. He watches the hounds a deal more than he does his fences.'

If looks go for anything Lady Helen is a winner all over; and although she lashes out viciously when a stranger comes near her, she lets Jack and Norah go up to her, and seems thoroughly to appreciate the latter's caresses. If Jack could hear the words whispered into that chestnut ear, would not his heart be glad? 'Bring him back safe, my darling, bring him back to me, and you shall live on sugar for the rest of your days, and never race again.' But, close as Jack is to her, he cannot hear words scarcely syllabled; still, there is a joyous gleam in his eyes as he goes off to don his silk, for just as they were leaving the stable he and Norah somehow dropped behind, and to his query, 'Then I ride to win or lose *everything*?' she whispered, very low, but he heard her, 'Don't lose!'

Sir Harry hurries Norah back to the coach to see the horses canter past. First come a couple of hunters, well known as fine fencers, but nothing more, according to the talent. Then comes the black, sweeping by with a long easy stride, which forces all to allow that he's a nice goer; but only the eye of knowledge can find any beauty in him. Lady Helen, on the other hand, is beautiful to the eye of a child, but Jack evidently has his hands full. Tearing at her bridle, plunging madly forward, and every now and then curling her back hideously in a gigantic buck, she took no pains to conceal her intense loathing of the whole thing.

'Just hold her and sit her; she couldn't be fitter,' quoted Sir Harry. 'Exactly, but rather Jack than me.'

Will they ever get off? Ah! the flag falls; they are away at last; but it takes all Jack knows to prevent Lady Helen's breaking away, and two thirds of the field are off before her. A brown thoroughbred is leading, making strong running; Campbell keeps his horse well in hand, still he is a good bit ahead of the chestnut, who, after brushing through the first

fence, begins to settle down under Jack's delicate handling. The third fence floors the brown; the black is outpacing Dragoon and Red Ensign, but a common-looking bay is now forging ahead, stealing over the ground as though he meant mischief. They are in the plough now, Captain Campbell's white sleeves clotted with clay, and Jack's blue-and-yellow hoops a good deal smeared. He is nursing Lady Helen carefully, but she doesn't seem to need it, going strong and well through the dirt. She clears the rails like a bird, and, landing on the turf, Jack takes up the running in good earnest, and passing the black at the next fence he and the bay are racing abreast: both clear it, but before the brook is reached, the black is at Lady Helen's quarters. Mad with excitement, she fails to see the water until close to it, swerves, jumps it sideways, and somehow she and Jack between them just save a fall.

The black, however, takes it in his stride, and sails away with a good lead, for the bay is lying in the brook quite pumped, and those who remain are out of the running.

The excitement now is furious. Sir Harry's coach positively rocks with it; but Norah sits like a stone, her glass fixed on the flashing specks. 'She won't have it, by Jove! Campbell wins! Jack's down! He's done for!—no, it's the bay! Hurrah! there goes the chestnut!'

Yes! there she goes, striding along strong and well, as fresh seemingly as when she started; the black, too, seems full of going. But Jack now forces the pace with a vengeance. At the big double he is a good length ahead. Campbell sees that his only hope lies in getting Lady Helen down. Well does he know her rushing propensities, and, with a muttered oath, he drives the black along, meaning to give Jack a fall at the next fence, but the chestnut has the legs of him, and goes clean away. In vain to flog and spur; as Lady Helen nears the hurdles the black comes down heavily at the last fence, falling on his rider. It looks nasty, but—'The mare wins! The mare!'—and, amidst a din of hoarse cheering, Jack canters in, hands down.

Captain Campbell isn't much hurt, only knocked silly. 'Serve him right, too,' says Jack, as they drive off; but he doesn't look very savage as he says it, for Norah's hand is in his, and he knows that he has won, not only the Brunton Cup, but the handsomest pair of chestnuts in the kingdom.



The Defeat of Captain Cook

Find here

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

FRANK SIMKINSON'S DÉBUT.

By FINCH MASON.

CHAPTER I.

 HERE was no doubt about it. We are not in a position to name the exact amount, but it was something uncommonly handsome ; in fact, 'a very large fortune of silver and gold,' that young Frank Simkinson came into possession of on attaining his majority.

For this happy consummation Master Frank was indebted to the fact of his father having died before his son had arrived at the age of six. Loud were the lamentations on all sides—for the Squire was very popular with everybody—the day that his favourite hunter, Cockamaroo, put his foot in a rabbit-hole in the middle of a field whilst galloping along in the wake of the hounds, not only breaking his own neck but that of his master as well. Still greater was the grief of his widow, who for a long while refused to be comforted. And here we may venture to remark that, sad though her husband's untimely end was, it came in the very nick of time ; for there is no use disguising the fact that, had the Squire lived but a very short time longer, he would not have had (to use a slang expression) 'a feather to fly with.' He would have been reduced to subsisting on his wife's settlement—not a large one,—and his son, consequently, would at his death have been but a poor orphan instead of (excuse the pun) the exceedingly-well-off 'un he now was.

Had the Squire stuck to his shooting and fishing and hunting it would have been all right, and there would have been no harm done. But, unfortunately, he was fond of racing as well ; and backing other peoples' horses not being sufficient excitement for him, he must needs have some of his own as well, and soon he

became what the sporting journalists called a well-known supporter of Snaffle's stable.

Things went well for the first year or two after his first appearance on the turf, and then the luck suddenly changed, and things went all wrong with the Squire's betting-book. The horses in Snaffle's stable, we verily believe, were the most perverse brutes under the sun. They won marvellous trials in private, and wouldn't try a yard in public. They also won when nobody had a shilling on. They broke down perpetually on the eve of big races. In fact, never were such horses known. They would have broken the Bank of England, much less Mr. Simkinson.

No wonder, then, that in a very short time the poor gentleman, having raised every available shilling he could on the estate by legitimate means to meet his engagements on various settling-days, at length was obliged to have recourse to what he playfully called the 'Hooknosed Brigade.'

When a man once goes to the Jews it is generally a case of who-hoop! and it was so in this case. The Knights of the Nose had long marked the Squire for their own, and received him with open arms. Such a fine, open-hearted fellow he was, too! not only did he raise money on all occasions for himself, but was always ready to 'get up behind' for a friend.

This sort of amusement naturally could not last long. Indeed, Solomon Moss, the Squire's principal creditor, was debating within himself at the time of the latter's death whether, when he foreclosed, which he intended doing shortly, he wouldn't cut Civil Row and go and open shop, as he called it, at Brambleby Hall, *vice* the Squire sold up. And we really believe that Mr. Simkinson must have been debating within himself as to ways and means of 'raising the wind' in the future, at the very moment of his accident. Otherwise, had he been looking about him, he could hardly have failed to have seen and avoided that treacherous rabbit-hole, that turned out literally such a fatal investment.

The Squire's untimely end, then, though it may sound unfeeling to say so, occurred just in the very nick of time. Solomon Moss had to abandon for the present his day-dream of setting up as a country gentleman. He and his brother sheenies were paid their claims; the race-horses were sold; Brambleby, together with the shooting, was let to a stranger; and the widow, retaining a few of the old servants, retired with

her child to a small house in the neighbourhood, determined for the future to devote the whole of her time and attention to the bringing up of her darling in the way he should go.

Mrs. Simkinson had not the slightest idea of her husband's transactions on the turf until she was enlightened by the lawyers after his death. She knew he went to races and had a few horses, but, being a very mild, gentle lady, with very little knowledge of the world, she had no idea that keeping race-horses cost more than breeding tame pheasants or fancy poultry. How horrified she was, then, at the extent of her late husband's operations, may well be imagined. He, whom she had looked upon as a perfect paragon amongst men, to have been in reality nothing but a blackleg ! For the poor lady had been brought up to look upon every one who gambled in that light. She shuddered at the bare recollection. Never, though, should her Frank be subjected to such temptation. No ! Perish the thought ! As she pressed her darling to her bosom, thereby transferring some of the raspberry jam, with which his mouth and chin were plentifully ornamented, on to the snow-white lappets of her Marie Antoinette cap, the widow made a mental vow to Heaven, there and then, that never ! no, never ! would she let her treasure leave her side for a moment until he had arrived at man's estate ; by which period she hoped that the morals with which she had in the meanwhile inculcated in him would have so borne fruit as to render her son invulnerable against all temptations likely to beset the path of a young man commencing life.

Now amongst the domestics the widow brought with her to her new abode was Master Frank's nurse, a tall, middle-aged, angular, knock-me-down sort of woman, with hard wooden features, and a moustache like a Lifeguardsman's on her upper lip, who rejoiced in the name of Cook, and who was dubbed by the rest of the servants, who detested her, 'Captain Cook,' probably on account of the commanding way she had with her. The services of this lady Frank's mamma would gladly have dispensed with, and she would have liked of all things to have given her warning ; but she did not for one very good reason, viz., that she was afraid to do so. Mrs. Cook, or, as we will call her in future, Captain Cook, so domineered over her mistress, as, indeed, she did everybody she came into contact with, that she did not dare say her soul was her own ; and the chances are that, had she attempted to get rid of the woman, her order would have been taken no notice of.

So she resigned herself to her fate, and Captain Cook took formal possession of the nursery in the new home, hung up on her entry a brand new birch-rod of huge dimensions over the fireplace—her insignia of office—just in the same way as an Admiral hoists his flag when he goes on board the flagship, whilst she planted her foot down on the hearthrug with an air of ‘Here I am, and here I mean to stop!’

The servants, who one and all hated her, at the same time fearing her, had all manner of stories about Captain Cook. She had beaten off three burglars single-handed in the last place she was at. She had administered a sound thrashing with the formidable umbrella she carried to a would-be admirer, none other than Tom Stoat the ratcatcher, who on a certain occasion, when excited with love and beer, was rash enough to try and snatch a kiss from the lips of his charmer. Joe, the knife-boy, indeed came running into the kitchen one day, with a pale face and tears running down his grimy countenance, for protection, vowing that ‘that ’ere Captain had tried to murder him, and blowed if he’d stand it any longer!’ The youthful Joseph, it appeared, being of poetic turn of mind, had, like ‘Ange Pitou,’ composed a set of verses of an inflammatory nature, of which his enemy, Mrs. Cook, was the heroine, and in which he commented on that lady’s moral character and personal appearance in anything but a complimentary manner.

He was chanting this effusion to himself with great gratification to the tune of the ‘Dogs’ Meat Man’ one fine afternoon, the while he cleaned the family boots, when the Captain, passing in the vicinity of the knife-house, hearing his melodious voice stopped to listen. He had just finished his little song as she stopped, but Joe was so pleased with the effect that he encored the last verse, and beating time with a blacking-brush broke out once more with,—

(*Tune*—‘The Dogs’ Meat Man.’)

‘She’s a regular wixen is Captain Cook,
She’s a mug like a ’image, has Captain Cook;
And all the men as at her they look
Cries, “I never saw a huglier than Captain Cook!”’

‘Nor more did I, neither,’ remarked Joseph at the end of his ditty, as he descended from his seat on the knife-board. ‘She’s the hugliest old devil I ever *did* see, and that’s the—— Oh, no! I didn’t mean you, Missis Cook!’ bellowed the boy, for the indignant listener had suddenly pounced on her victim like a

hawk on a partridge, and seizing a boot that lay handy, belaboured with it her libeller until he roared for mercy ; not letting him go, indeed, until quite exhausted with her efforts.

This, then, was the agreeable female to whom, in conjunction with his fond mother, was entrusted the bringing-up of the young master of Brambleby.

We will pass quickly over Frank Simkinson's early career. Suffice it to say, that by the time he arrived at man's estate—with the exception of the curate of the parish, who had been by way of being his private tutor—he did not possess a single male friend. He was entirely ignorant of all sports of the field, never, indeed, having as yet ridden anything bigger than a pony ; nor had he ever fired off a gun save once, when he accidentally loosed off an old single-barrelled poker belonging to the gardener, which he had found in the tool-house, nearly in so doing blowing his own innocent head off. In short, he knew nothing about the world and its ways, and was consequently just about as fine a specimen of the genus 'Muff' as you would find in a day's march, and doing infinite credit to those two eminent trainers, his mother and her lieutenant, the now venerable Captain Cook.

It was not until after he had attained his twenty-first birthday that his fond parent gave her consent to her darling paying his first country-house visit. And it was in fear and tribulation that she did so. Indeed, I doubt very much if he would have gone at all had the redoubtable Captain Cook been on the spot ; but that worthy woman, having not long before come into a little property in the shape of a small farm, the independent position was more than the old lady could resist ; so, to the secret joy of the much-sat-upon Frank, she threw up her command and took her departure : not forgetting, though, to warn the young man, with a solemn shake of her forefinger at parting, that she wasn't going far away ; and if she ever heard of his developing at any time any vices, such as horseracing, gambling, &c., she should be down on him wherever he was in the 'twinkling of a bedpost,' as she expressed it.

One fine frosty morning, then, after taking as heart-rending a farewell of his widowed mother as if he was about to make an expedition to the North Pole, though his destination was only five-and-twenty miles off, our hero found himself in the family coach bound for the railway station, for the first time in his career a free agent.

CHAPTER II.

COVERLEY COURT, the establishment that Frank Simkinson, after numerous invitations, was at length permitted to visit, was the abode of Mark Coverley, one of his father's oldest friends, and had the reputation of being one of the liveliest and most free-and-easy establishments in the county. Mr. Coverley, a jolly old gentleman and a first-rate sportsman, was one of the most popular of men ; and as he liked 'keeping the ball rolling,' as he expressed it—in which laudable ambition he was ably backed up by his wife and family, the said family consisting of a son and daughter, the latter a lovely girl of eighteen—his house was seldom destitute of guests ; in fact, it was a case of 'high jinks' at Coverley Court pretty nearly all the year round. For a long while past the jolly Squire, who cherished a lively recollection of his old friend, Frank's father, had endeavoured, with the aid of his wife, to try and induce Mrs. Simkinson to let her son go about a bit and make a man of him ; but it was no use, and it was not until now, when he was of age and old enough as she thought to be trusted, that she could persuade herself to let him go, and only then when she had ascertained beyond doubt that the Squire, though indulging freely in all other sports, was in no way connected with that terrible institution—the turf.

It had been arranged that Frank should stay for a month at Coverley Court, and during the first fortnight of his absence from home he, as became a dutiful son, kept up a constant correspondence with his fond mother through the medium of the post. At the end of that period the letter-writing on his part began to get smaller by degrees and beautifully less. Towards the close of the stipulated time Mrs. Simkinson received a letter from her son, saying, much to her disappointment, that he had settled to prolong his visit, apparently, as he mentioned no date for his return, for an indefinite period. For three weeks after the receipt of this epistle no tidings came from the prodigal son, until one day, as the widow was sitting at luncheon, a telegram arrived from Frank—she was afraid to open it at first—announcing his return that very evening in time for dinner.

Shortly before seven o'clock the sound of carriage-wheels was heard, the hall-door bell rang violently, and in two minutes more Frank was in his mother's arms. Heavens ! could this loudly attired youth, all rings, and chains, and pins, and—

dreadful to relate!—smelling fearfully of cigar smoke, be her boy? What a change!

‘Frank, dear—why—why! how you’ve grown!’ was all the widow could gasp. ‘Have some tea; and I’m sure you must be cold! Draw your chair close to the fire, my dear boy!’

‘No, thanks, mother; but I don’t mind a glass of sherry. On second thoughts, though, I think I’ll have a brandy-and-soda instead. Have you shown my man where my room is, Thomson?’ (This to the old butler, who now entered the room.)

‘Your *what?*’ exclaimed his astonished mother.

‘My man—my new servant, mother. Got him from Legbail—Lord Legbail, you know, who was staying at Coverley last week. He was too extravagant for Leggy, so I offered him a “pony” to give him warning, and now he’s my property. A perfect treasure, dearest mother! and cleans top-boots better than any man in England. Ah! Hooray! Here’s the brandy-and-soda! I’m as dry as a lime-kiln! And now, dear mother,’ said Frank, sitting down in an armchair, ‘I’ll tell you what I dropped down on you in such a hurry for. To begin with, I’m going to be married—married and done for, eh? Yes! don’t look so incredulous. It’s a fact. Who to? Why, Nelly Coverley, to be sure! the jolliest, most scrumptious little popsy-wopsy in England! Here’s her health, bless her!’ and suiting the action to the word, Frank drained his soda-and-brandy at a gulp, and paused for a reply.

Reply! Poor Mrs. Simkinson was so taken aback that she was quite bereft of speech.

‘Oh! and I say, mother,’ went on Frank, ‘I’ll tell you another reason I came here in such a hurry for. Do you know where my father’s old racing-jackets are? I know there are a lot somewhere. I’m going to ride a mare of old Coverley’s on Thursday in the Hunt Steeplechase at Mexborough, and I want to wear one of the old jackets—for luck, don’t you know. You ought to come with us, *ma mère*, and see yours truly sport silk for the first time—ch? What a game it will be, to be sure! Nell says she’ll be hanged if she’ll marry me if I don’t win! Ha! ha! ha!’

The old butler, who looked by the way fully as scared as his mistress, now entered the room with flat candles, denoting that it was time to dress for dinner; and poor Mrs. Simkinson was glad of the excuse to go upstairs and commune with herself in her own room on the extraordinary and unlooked-for change in

her son's manners and appearance, and to digest the startling news he had brought.

During dinner that evening Frank rattled away so that the widow could not get a word in edgeways. He drank, too, a great deal more champagne than she thought was good for him, for all that he professed not to like it. 'It was too sweet,' he said, 'by long chalks.' Behind his chair, too, stood the valet he had bought of Lord Legbail—a dreadful creature, thought the widow, with his greasy hair and mustachios, and his rings and studs, smelling dreadfully, too, of brandy-and-water. Coming down to breakfast the next morning, she was greatly shocked by meeting the wretch on the stairs on his way to Frank's room, bearing a bottle of soda-water and a spirit-decanter on a salver. The valet (he was a Frenchman) grinned double as he skipped aside to let the indignant lady pass.

'Oh! that it should have come to this already!' she groaned, inwardly, as she proceeded sadly downstairs. 'Brandy-and-soda-water before breakfast! engaged to be married! and, worst of all, going to ride in a steeplechase! What *will* his old nurse, Cook, say, when she hears the news? I will drive straight off to Crabtree Farm and consult her directly Frank has gone.'

CHAPTER III.

It is a lovely spring day, and the Harkaway Hunt races are in full swing. All the world and his wife are assembled on the course, conspicuous amongst the numerous equipages being the drag containing the party from Coverley Court. The old Squire is in his glory, and such eating of plovers' eggs and drinking of champagne is going on as never was. Nelly Coverley, looking more charming than ever, is perched on the box-seat on the drag, whilst next to her, in a drab 'down-the-road' coat, with large white buttons as big as cheeseplates covering his white racing-jacket, sits her young man, as she playfully calls him, our friend Frank Simkinson. A shout is heard, the Farmers' Cup is being run, and the horses are just in sight.

'Now, Frank, it's your turn,' says Miss Nelly a moment later, when the race is over. 'Be off, or you'll be late, Sir. And mind you win, or I'll never speak to you again!' was her parting injunction as Frank swung hurriedly down from off the drag and hurried off to the stand.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, goes a bell. Make way there, for here

come the horses for the principal race of the day—the Hunt Cup. Up go the numbers—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Capital! all going that are coloured on the card but No. 6, and he had no chance. Jolly old Mr. Coverley has made Frank a present overnight of his mare, Polly Perkins, consequently that youth dons his own colours—white jacket, scarlet sleeves and cap—that in his late father's time were so conspicuous on the turf. The old Squire declares it does his heart good to see 'em. Down the course walk the ten competitors, led by Frank, some looking at their boots, one or two too frightened to do anything but look straight between their horses' ears, others trying to look as if riding a steeplechase was an everyday occurrence with them, and failing signally in the attempt. And now, having arrived at the bottom of the course, they turn to jump a flight of hurdles in their preliminary canter.

* * * * *

What is this terrible apparition in black that suddenly appears in front of Polly Perkins, just as her jockey is turning her round to have a shy at the hurdles, startling the mare so that, shying, she nearly sends Frank over her head? Who is the owner of the hoarse voice that, addressing him by the name of 'Franky!' commands him to get off that nasty vicious brute that very minnut? Whose is that gingham umbrella of gigantic dimensions that darkens the air in a threatening manner in the immediate vicinity of Polly Perkins's well-bred head? Can it be the once omnipotent Captain Cook? Yes! that mustachioed upper lip, those dreadful corkscrew curls, that fiery-red face—alas! since the Captain has turned farmer she has, we regret to say, developed a passion for brandy-and-water—that hideous bonnet, on this occasion stuck in a defiant manner, whether purposely or by accident we know not, well on one side of her head, can belong to none other than Frank's old nurse. Captain Cook it is! But the Captain's reign of terror is over; her power is gone for good. Every dog has his day, and the Robespierre of the nursery has had hers, so far as Frank is concerned, never to return.

'Hallo, old gal! you here? How are you?' is the reply she gets from her late charge, who sits on his mare as cool as a cucumber.

Emboldened by brandy-and-water, and incensed by the jeers of the lookers-on, the angry old woman made one more bold bid for victory, though, like that of the old Guard at Waterloo, it

was a futile one ; and seizing hold of the justly indignant Polly Perkins's bridle, she once more sternly commanded Frank to dismount.

'Hallo ! this is past a joke !' exclaimed that young gentleman, trying to pacify the now excited mare. 'Leave go, you stupid old fool, do ! You won't ? Hi, Joe ! don't stand laughing there like an idiot ! Just come and take this old vixen away from the mare's head, will you, and hold her tight whilst I get away !'

Joe, a smart young groom in the Squire's stables, in answer to Frank's appeal now appeared from the ropes, displaying to the astounded Captain as he did so the identical features of the whilom knife-boy whom she had once administered such a dressing to with an uncleaned boot in the knife-house at Brambleby, and which incident we have already described.

'Now then, old lady, drop that 'ere !' said Joe, delighted at the task before him ; 'don't you see you're a-frightening of the mare ? And no wonder, she's never see'd sech a scarecrow before, I should think ! Why,' and here the ex-knife-boy burst into a diabolical laugh, 'blessed if you ain't huglier than ever, Captain !'

The infuriated old woman waited for no more. Dropping Polly Perkins's bridle she turned like a wounded tiger on her tormentor, and 'went for him' forthwith with the big umbrella. Frank seized the opportunity to be off, and, turning sharp round, sent the outraged Polly Perkins at the hurdles, which the mare jumped so high as nearly to unship our hero, who, it is only right to say, had not as yet acquired that elegance in the saddle that he possessed in after years.

The competitors for the Hunt Cup started immediately afterwards on their three-mile journey, and as they came round to the spot where he had been tackled by the terror of his early boyhood, Frank was aware of a mob of stable-boys and yokels shouting and dancing in great glee round somebody ; and as a huge umbrella was playing round the heads of the mob, now descending here, now there, with telling effect, he guessed, and rightly too, that Captain Cook was having, for once in her life, a warm time of it. Anyhow, he laughed so that he nearly fell off the mare at the next fence, and to this unseemly mirth on his part we assign the fact that he only won the Hunt Cup by a short head : that happy result, indeed, being, we are bound to say, more attributable to the game and speed of Polly Perkins than to the jockeyship of her pilot.

And having weighed in, and the welcome 'All right!' being given, Frank walked off to the drag to receive the smiles and congratulations of his lady-love.

He was just about to 'dip his beak,' as he called it, into a large silver cup containing champagne (for he was thirsty after his ride), when a shout from the far end of the course made him hold his hand for a second. In the distance he saw, surrounded by a yelling mob, a pony-chaise being driven rapidly away by a female attired in black, who was apparently urging the unfortunate pony in the shafts to further speed with the aid of a huge umbrella which she used by way of a whip.

It was Captain Cook leaving the course.

THE MAD PERCHERON.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE PRAIRIE.

By GEORGE HERBERT JALLAND.



GEORGE! I guess if you'll ride over to Box Elder Creek, and run in "The Savage" and his mares; we'll brand them half-dozen late colts, who I reckon by this time can bear the iron; yew'll be pretty sartin to find 'em near the head of the creek, they never leave them bluffs far.'

The speaker was Jim Helos, a Texan, the foreman of the Elk Horse Company's ranch, by whom I had been employed for the last six months, taking my turn at horse-breaking, hay-making, and in the fatigue of the annual 'roundup;' but now the great stress of work was over for the year, and as I had been promised a job through the winter I began to look forward to the time when there would be nothing to do but look after the stallions and loaf around the ranch.

The Elk Company had been engaged in experimenting by crossing large Percheron sires with the small common scrut mares of the country, in order to produce animals suitable for artillery, trams, and roadsters. The Company had now been established three years, and by the appearance of the numerous good-looking foals, yearlings, and two-year-olds, many of the latter already exceeding the height of their dams, the speculation promised to be a most successful one. All their handsome stud of stallions had been imported from France, no expense having

been spared to secure first-rate animals : they were all greys, and none stood less than 16 hands : they were every one models of substance, breeding, and action, and, with the exception of a horse rightly named 'The Savage,' they were gentleness itself ; but this animal from the first was of a vicious disposition, becoming worse and more dangerous as he grew older, until at last he had half killed a man who was engaged in grooming him ; then he seemed to discover his great powers, for after this occurrence he allowed nobody to enter his stable, greeting all comers either with his rows of shining ivories or with his massive iron-shod hoofs. Starvation, total darkness, everything was in turn tried, but he remained as savage as ever, and being useless as a stud-horse, or for any other purpose, the foreman applied to head-quarters for permission to shoot him : but the answer came back, 'Certainly not ! He cost two thousand dollars, and must be tamed.' So our foreman in desperation decided to turn him on to the prairie with some mares, and see what a winter's run on the bleak plains would do for his temper.

A bunch of brood-mares ranging on Box Elder were consequently driven into the corral, and 'The Savage' was turned loose amongst them to make their acquaintance ; here he neighed and pranced about in his delight at being at liberty, galloping round the mares, kicking and biting at them, until he had got the bunch herded into a corner ; then tearing to the other side of the enclosure, where we stood watching his antics, quickly made us scramble over the railings in our anxiety to avoid him.

Towards night he quieted down, and in the morning the bars of the corral were opened, and 'The Savage' and his newly acquired harem were let loose on to the prairie ; out they went with a rush, the old bell-mare leading, and the stallion bringing up the rear, biting and driving forwards those that attempted to lag behind. They made a bee-line for their range on Box Elder, and soon disappeared over the divide.

Some time had elapsed since this event, and 'The Savage' and his mares had been frequently seen quietly feeding amongst the bluffs, and at the approach of a mounted man the horse seemed more inclined to gather his band together and run away than to attack the intruder. So, though I had no fancy for his teeth and hoofs, yet I had little fear but that I should easily corral him and his mares.

It was afternoon when I started, but as Box Elder was only about ten miles off, and I was mounted on a rather quick pony, I

calculated I should be able to find the bunch and corral them in about three hours. I had better luck even than I expected, for when I reached the crest of the rise which sloped down to the creek I at once saw the mares ; they were scattered along the bottom feeding amongst the rich herbage, and there was 'The Savage,' rubbing necks with a mare, the very picture of happiness and contentment. I jogged down towards them, and as I approached the stallion discontinued his amusement and trotted round the mares, driving them into a close bunch, and began to move them off in an opposite direction to that which I wished ; so I put spurs to my pony, and, after a short gallop, headed the herd and turned them. 'The Savage' rather objected to this, and kept galloping ahead, trying to stop the mares ; but I kept them going by dint of shouting and making a noise with my rawhide 'quirt' (whip) against my 'chaperajos' (leggings), until I got the band within about a mile of the ranch, when, suddenly, the stallion seemed to divine my intention—I expect the memory of his confinement and harsh usage flashed across him—for he redoubled his efforts to turn the mares, but was unsuccessful, until, changing his tactics, he rushed amongst them, biting, squealing, and kicking, scattering them in all directions. I made an attempt to collect them, but it was useless, so I pulled up to let my pony catch his wind, and watched the cunning horse gather his mares and take them off at full gallop triumphantly back to their range.

But I was determined not to be beaten so easily ; so again I set off after them, and after a long chase I again managed to get them turned. This time, 'The Savage,' instead of trying to head the mares and drive them back, came straight for me, his ears laid back and his nostrils wide expanded. I shouted and whirled my quirt, trying to frighten him ; but he came tearing along, evidently intending mischief, and ere I could make up my mind what course to pursue my trembling pony caught the bit in his teeth and bolted. I laid back in my saddle and tugged at the reins, trying to stop him, not liking to be driven off in this manner ; but on looking over my shoulder I saw the huge Percheron was still after me, and, thinking discretion the better part of valour, I dropped the reins and let the pony gallop as hard as he wished.

Away we went, clattering over the dry, sun-baked uplands, my active pony striving every muscle to escape the revengeful stallion thundering behind. I looked, and was astonished to

find the brute was fast gaining upon us, for I had thought my pony could easily outstrip the clumsy carthorse ; but, whether it was from fright or fatigue from his previous exertions, my steed was losing ground at every stride, and it was now only a matter of a few minutes ere the enraged brute would be up with us. I plied whip and spur, but to no purpose ; our pursuer was now within three yards, galloping like a racehorse ; his long silver mane and tail streaming in the air, his eyeballs glistening with madness, and his huge mouth, with its rows of savage teeth, ready to grip. With an unearthly scream he made a dash at me, and by throwing myself forwards on to my pony's neck I only just escaped the terrible jaws, as they closed with a snap, tearing the shirt from my back, and slightly scraping my skin. Tossing the piece of cloth into the air, he made another attempt, but before he could grip I brought my heavy 'quirt' across his eyes, half blinding him ; with a vicious snort he dashed in front, and, wheeling suddenly, kicked my pony on the off-shoulder with the full force of his muscular hind legs ; down we came in a second, and before I could kick myself free from the saddle I was lying half beneath my pony, whose shoulder was shattered and powerless : the poor beast never made a struggle, but lay moaning and trembling.

I looked round for my pursuer ; there he stood, some ten yards off, contemplating his work with evident satisfaction. And now I fondly hoped he had wreaked his vengeance, and would leave us. But no, the moment he saw me raise my head he came towards us. 'Now,' I thought to myself, 'all is u-p.' But I laid perfectly still, hardly daring to breathe. I could hear his heavy footfalls as he approached. He first went to my pony's head, sniffing and snorting ; he then smelt the poor, shivering beast all over, passing round by its hind-quarters, until he came to where I lay entangled in the saddle. I could feel his hot breath on my cheek, and every moment I expected to feel those terrible teeth meeting in my flesh, or the strike of a heavy foot on my defenceless head ; but having half turned me over with his nose, and having satisfied himself by a lengthy inspection, putting me to horrible tortures, he at length struck the ground five or six times, and with a shrill neigh went galloping back to his mares. I was too weak from fright to at once attempt to get my left leg from beneath my pony, who was lying with all his weight upon it, so I lay quietly for a few minutes, thanking my stars I had escaped so easily, and re-



J. H. Holland.

"With an unearthly scream, he made a dash at me!"

solving this should be my last attempt to corral 'The Savage' alone.

As the incidents in my exciting adventure were passing through my mind, I heard the sound of distant hoof beats, and raising myself up to see what it could be, I was appalled to find it was 'The Savage' returning, bringing with him his mares. Could he be doing this to show them his victory, or was it to let them see the end of the drama, as he kicked and tore us till life was extinct? The herd came nearer and nearer, and now I could hear the mares cantering round us, blowing and snorting at the unaccustomed sight of a prone horse and rider; sometimes one would venture nearer than her fellows, until a slight movement of my suffering pony would make her retreat with a frightened snort.

But where was 'The Savage,' and what was he doing? Hatching fresh mischief I had no doubt. This inspection by the mares went on for some time, till there was a sudden commotion amongst them, as they were hurried off by their lord and master, who as he passed where we lay gave my poor beast a vicious kick in the ribs, narrowly missing my right leg. He only took his mares for a short distance, and then returned to keep guard over his prostrate foes, taking up his position about twenty-five yards from where we lay. By this time the day was almost spent, and the welcome darkness would soon be upon us, when I hoped to steal away unperceived before the moon rose.

I will not describe how awfully long the time seemed as I lay with my bruised leg beneath the still trembling pony, and the awful moments I endured when the stallion made a second tour of inspection round us, sniffing every part of the pony and me.

At last darkness came—that utter blotting out of all light before the rising of the moon—and I began my struggles to free myself; but it was no easy matter, for I felt horribly faint and weak, and when I did get clear I was so stiff and exhausted I could hardly stand. But I pulled myself together, and having with my clasp-knife opened the jugular vein of my now useless but suffering steed, I began my walk of five or six miles to the ranch, which eventually I reached about eight o'clock, thoroughly done up. I told my story to the foreman, who wasted no sympathy upon me, but told me he reckoned I had had a pretty 'close call,' and that I had better ride over to the city and see what was to be done with 'The Savage.' The Company gave

leave to have him destroyed, and in response to my appeal to be allowed to execute the deed they gave me an order to Helos to that effect ; and you bet I never fired a cartridge with greater satisfaction than I did the one that made 'The Savage' bite the dust, as he once more came at me with open mouth to drive me from his range.

THE KING OF THE WOODLAND GLADE.

By 'LONGTAIL.'

THERE'S a bird in the woodland of plumage so rare,
 Of form and of carriage right grand,
 And Dame Nature hath constantly made it her care,
 Glowing hues in October should brighten the land.
 When the glade's bonnie King
 From the bracken doth spring,
 And the gunner's afield, and the oak groves all ring,
 Oh ! there's joy in the air when the pheasant's on wing !

I sing not of those victims we rear by the hand,
 I'll swear they are poultry, not game,
 Nor of battues for mashers so carefully planned,
 To secure a big bag with their death-dealing flame,
 When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

No ; the free-soaring flight of the pride of the grove,
 Gives joy to true sportsmen, I ween ;
 They're the birds that through turnips and hedgerows will rove,
 And the dogs must be staunch, and their owners all keen,
 When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

Let the tyro beware that the 'King' as he flies,
 Though seemingly wanting in speed,
 Is a fast one on wing, and doth constantly rise,
 And his hand with his eye to keep time will have need,
 When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

If to list to my warning the youngster should fail,
 At close of the day he'll relate
 How he brought down the feathers from many a tail,
 And he'll blame his scant bag on cantankerous Fate,
 When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

When the saplings stand thick and the dogs spring the game,
 His wings are impeded for flight,
 And no sportsman I trow that is worthy the name
 But refrains at the hovering bird to take sight,
 When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

To the fox and the stag each true hunter gives law,
A fight for his freedom to make ;
Do the same ere the trigger you ruthlessly draw,
Or a pothunter's name you'll deservedly make,
When the glade's bonnie King, &c.

Then hurrah for the 'rocketer' towering on high,
The 'swimmers' that swallow-like glide,
Both determined the skill of the veterans to try,
And make sport for the gunner at brave Autumntide.
When the glade's bonnie King
From the bracken doth spring,
And the gunner's afield, and the oak groves all ring,
Oh! there's joy in the air when the pheasant's on wing!

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

A STORY OF DONCASTER.

By MRS. CHAWORTH MUSTERS.

IT was the 'Leger Day' at Doncaster. A really perfect September morning. The sun began to shine directly he rose, so there was no fear of mist to shroud the further side of the Town Moor from the eager gazers. There was just enough breeze to infuse a delicious crispness into the air, and not enough to make it dusty.

The trains were hurrying from all points of the compass to converge upon the old Yorkshire town where the bells in the tall church tower that had rung for the victories of Sir Tatton and Voltigeur in days gone by, and many another 'crack' since then, were now pealing joyfully above the whistling and screaming of the railway engines.

Load after load of holiday-makers were being wafted from the smoky dens of the West Riding, from the Black Country, from the great manufacturing centres of the Midland counties, and from the busy towns of the North, to 'see the Leger,' all noisy, cheerful, good-humoured, and bent on enjoying themselves.

In the country round Doncaster, among the stubble-fields and pleasant woodlands of Yorkshire, the roads were gay with gigs, traps, light carts, and conveyances of all sorts, full of smiling faces; and even the struggling farmer had left the tail-end of his harvest for this one day's outing, and was driving his 'Missis' to the races.

In the main street the cabs were like ships in a tempestuous sea, among the crowd of foot-people wending their way to the course, and one amateur coachman and local M. F. H., whose drag was laden with a bevy of beauty, was appealing in impassioned tones to the policeman on duty to allow him to pass his team, in the artistic manner he thoroughly understood, through the motley crew that surrounded him.

Peers, Members of Parliament, beautiful ladies, young sparks of fashion, old country gentlemen, trainers, owners of racehorses, and bookmakers, were all hurrying along in a heterogeneous mass to be in time for the first race. It was pleasant to see the old sportsman of fifty years ago, with his ruddy face and mutton-chop whiskers, criticising the horses as they turned into the paddock; and it was pleasant, in a different way, to look at the poor deaf and dumb children sitting out on the balcony of their school, just opposite the stand, watching the whole scene with eager delight, and expressing their ideas to each other with their fingers.

There were the people who had been to see the yearlings sold, and, after wondering at the enormous sums expended on some of those very uncertain commodities, were walking leisurely on to the town moor.

In the stands, where preparations were already being made at various tables for large and hospitable luncheons, ladies were rustling and congregating in the balcony, and the men were hurrying down to the ring to discover the state of the betting, or rushing breathlessly up again to impart the information to their fair clients and receive their orders.

Real lovers of horses had taken up the position they would only quit for short intervals during the day, near the paddock gates, where they could see the objects of their deepest interest from the first moment of their appearance to the last. The fair occupants of the stands were also engaged in 'spotting' the objects of *their* interest, and calling each other's attention to the dresses of a few of their own sex who had ventured into the paddock with their lords-in-waiting. The latter, too, came in for their share of remark.

'That's the D—— of P——; how pleased he looks! he must be sure of winning. And there's Archer; what pretty colours he's wearing! Let me look at your card and see whose they are.'

'What a frightful gown that is, with the red and blue stripes!'

'Yes; it's rather well made, though.'

And so on, *ad libitum*, till the bell rang.

Now, as I was arranging a seat in my favourite corner of the Lincolnshire Stand from which I could view the first race to advantage, I became aware of the presence of two young people just in front of me, who had taken up their position close to the parapet, and were leaning upon it, with their heads very close together, and looking at each other much more fixedly than at the course.

With that consideration which I have, through life, always endeavoured to show on such occasions (for to help a lame dog over a stile I hold to be a paramount duty), I endeavoured to efface myself as much as possible; but at that moment a man of Jewish appearance, who, I am convinced, had got in by mistake, pushed me from my coign of vantage, close to the backs of my young friends, and there I was obliged to remain until the crush was over.

The young lady's dark eyelashes were sweeping her pink cheek, which contrasted very prettily with her grey dress, and I could not avoid hearing her say in hurried tones, apparently in answer to some remark, 'Don't say anything to Papa till the end of the week, when we go home, *please*,' with a pathetic emphasis on the last word, and a shy glance out of a pair of lovely Irish eyes.

'Thank you, darling! I may then?' answered the other rapturously, taking hold of the unresisting hand that hung down just in front of me. 'Will you come down now, Marion, and see the Leger horses?' said a deep manly voice behind me, and at the same moment the intruder who had turned me out of my original place removed his objectionable person, and enabled me to retire from my awkward position in time to see a fresh-coloured old gentleman, evidently the young lady's father, taking her down, closely attended by the young man.

As my eyes were following the active well-set figure of the latter, my old friend Major Revel took a chair by my side and remarked, 'That's a pretty girl, that Miss Blackwood—isn't she? And will have a nice bit of money, too. She's an only child, and though they've boycotted the old sportsman in Ireland, he has a snug fortune elsewhere, luckily for him; and he's taken the Ledfordshire country, and brings his hounds there this season.'

'And who is the young man?' I asked, knowing that Major Revel's pride is in his acquaintance with everybody and every-

thing. 'That's Charlie Adair, also a Paddy, and a neighbour of the Blackwood's; a younger brother of Mr. Adair of Ballyclone. He's making the running very strong with the fair lady. They amuse me very much. They're staying with a party in the town, and are in the next lodging to mine. I chaffed Master Charlie about it this morning, and asked him how long he had taken to breakfasting at nine. He looked rather foolish. But you had better get a good place while you can,' continued my talkative friend, 'for the horses will be coming out directly. There's Geheimniss, the favourite. I must just go down and put the sovereign on I promised a lady to invest for her. I think it's pretty safe this time.'

There is a sort of romance of history about the Leger, which gives a dreamy feeling to an onlooker, even as the horses are fleeting past, when he recalls the giants of other days, and till within the last few years could look at some of them still in the flesh. It seems but a short time since the figure of Mr. George Payne was to be seen in the Stand, who in 1827 lost his first fortune, which perhaps altered the tenor of his life, when Matilda beat Mameluke after a succession of false starts supposed to have been caused intentionally. Fifty years afterwards there he was, as genial and impassible as ever.

As the spectator looks at the Red House he thinks of the anxious eyes that have watched that crucial point, of the fortunes lost and won at the Corner, and of the dull despair and frantic joy with which glasses have been shut up as the outsider or the favourite, as the case may be, crept up to that particular spot in the white railing that shows so little and means so much. My eyes are now, however, turned the other way as the string of three-year-olds come out. Shotover (the Derby winner), Marden, Sachem, Baliol, the favourite Geheimniss, and among others. Dutch Oven, a little dark-brown mare ridden by Archer in Lord Falmouth's colours. It is an old story now how, as the struggle became exciting, the mare seemed suddenly to drop from the clouds and swoop in a winner amid the astonished silence of the onlookers, having started at 40 to 1; how deafening were the shouts that greeted her, and the ovation that Archer received as the crowd almost dragged him from the saddle on his return to the paddock. Surely there can be few situations in life more intoxicating than that of the jockey who wins a great race on a popular horse, or one more likely to turn any but a strong head. All honour to those who stand it!

After the Leger the other races seemed rather tame, and I have no distinct recollection of them.

The brilliant sunshine of the morning became fitful and the sky cloudy. The wind arose, and the yellowing leaves began to drive along the footpath, not without a suspicious drop of rain here and there. As I was sitting at the station waiting patiently till the seething mass of humanity gradually cleared itself off in the various excursion trains, I saw my former acquaintance of the Stand, Mr. Adair, come hastily out of the station-master's office with so pale and altered a countenance, and so hurried and agitated a manner, that I felt sure some calamity had overtaken him, and was not surprised when a few minutes later one of my neighbours on the bench read out of the evening paper, 'Another murder in Ireland. Mr. Adair, of Ballyclone, was shot from behind a wall this morning on his way to a magistrate's meeting, and lies in a hopeless condition.'

'Another landlord shot, I see,' observed the reader carelessly; 'they'll soon clear them off at this rate.' 'Yes,' said his companion; 'just let me see what the winner of that last race started at.' 'This is your train,' said the voice of Major Revel, breathlessly coming up to me; 'I couldn't get away before. You haven't much time to spare, but I have been with that poor young Adair to arrange about a special to Chester; he has had a telegram to say his brother wants particularly to see him. I suppose you saw in the *Globe* that those brutes had shot him? He has a large family, poor fellow! It is a sad business.' So ended the day's enjoyment, and as I was whirled past the darkening fields and scurrying clouds I thought of the two sad hearts, which at three o'clock that afternoon were so full of hope and joyful anticipation.

The conclusion of this little romance I only heard accidentally some months later. It appeared that Mr. Adair lived to see his brother, and informed him of the state of his affairs, which was so deplorable that it was only by Charles sacrificing the fortune he was entitled to out of the estate that his nephews could be kept at school.

His old friend Mr. Blackwood came to the rescue, however, and engaged him as first whip; in which capacity I have no doubt he gave complete satisfaction, for the following spring, in looking through the *Morning Post* announcements, I was much interested in reading this paragraph:—

'A marriage is arranged, and will take place early in June,

between Mr. Charles Adair, son of the late Robert Adair of Ballyclone, Ireland, and Marion, the only daughter of Peter Blackwood, Esq., M. F. H.'

THE KICKING POLO PONY.

By 'CUTHBERT BRADLEY.'



OME, Tummas, tell us a story !'

'Couldn't do that if I tried, sir. I've always been taught to speak the truth !'

'Come, Tummas, none of your chaff, tell us a tale !'

'Well, sir, it will have to be a hoss's tale then, because I don't know no others !'

This conversation occurred inside the loose-box of a polo-pony range of stabling. Thomas the groom, or Tummas, as he was generally called, was down on his knees in the straw, with a blue bandage in his hands, in the act of bandaging the pony's near fore-leg. The other occupant was hard at work with paint and palette, taking the portraits of Thomas and the pony.

Pride at first felt no pain, although the position of the man much resembled a half-doubled-up boot-jack ; but when the novelty of the proud situation wore off, and cramp ensued, the model began to sigh like a furnace.

Mr. Madder Brown, the painter, was equal to the occasion, and at once propped up his model with a bucket, and applied a restorative in the shape of a little wholesome flattery.

'Tummas, your face interests me ; it is full of character !'

'Well, you see, sir, human beings is like hosses ; breeding always tells, and I've got a dash of good blood in my veins. My mother was a hactress, sir.'

'And your father I've heard was a coachman, so you are sporting on your sire's side and dramatic on your dam's side. Tummas, you are really a very interesting study !'

'My mother on her marriage, sir, gave up the acting and took to the lodge-gates ; I have her high spirits and her fascinating heye, sir !'

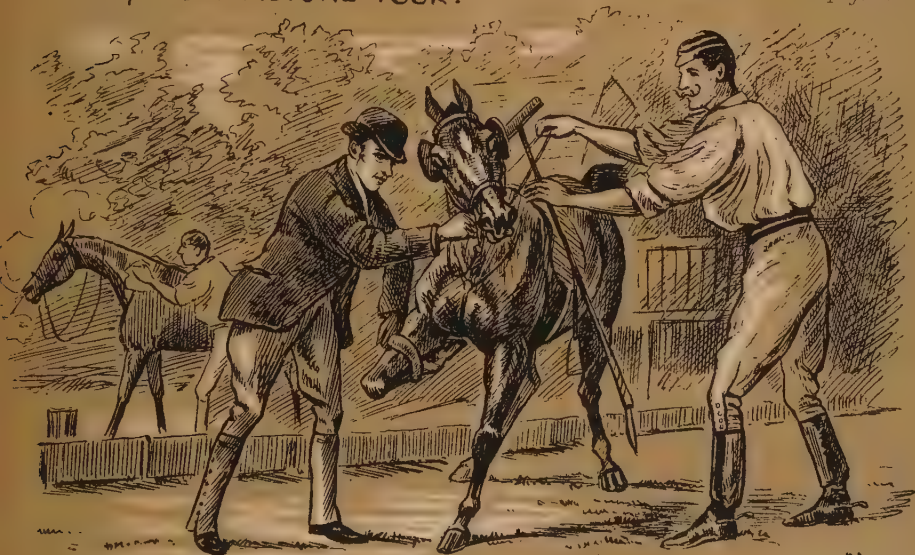
'Yes, Tummas ; I've taken particular pains to express the glitter of your eye in my picture !'

'It's a heye, sir, that's tamed many a refractory hoss, and I don't doubt but what it would have held an audience spell-



'HAVING THEIR PICTURE TOOK.'

see page 174



'AS WICKED AS THEY MAKE THEM.'

Robert Bradley

see page 176.



bound, like my poor mother's, if I had gone on the boards. But I never cared much about the the-ayter, excepting the equestrian pieces at Astley's !'

'What is the greatest conquest do you think that you have ever made with your eye ?'

'Well, sir, leaving out Amelia Jane, who was the smartest lady's-maid you ever saw, and is now my wife, my greatest conquest,—and I can safely say it, because it proved to be the turning-point in my life,—was when I subdued his Lordship's kicking polo-pony, the wickedest pony you ever heard of, sir ; and I must own a broom and a whistle had a share in the job.'

'Come, Tummas, she must have been wicked, for there are a great many who claim the title. But go on.'

'Well, sir, the great change in my life all come about this way. I went as lad into Lord Mount Sorrel's stable, my present service, sir. A pretty dance I led them at first ; poor old Mr. Johnsonsone, the stud-groom, he couldn't make head or tail of me ; he used to quilt me with his ash-plant that he kept in the saddle-room for the benefit of us stable-lads ; but I was that high-spirited and haughty that it made me worse : I wouldn't knuckle under. But they never had occasion to find fault with my work, or I should most probably have been sent to the right-about. There was no lad in the stable who could strap a horse down as well as I could, although I had to stand on a bucket to do it. But, of course, being only helper or table-boy, I didn't get much credit for what I did do ; the other grooms, who hated me like poison, took good care of that. I rode a nice weight, and could sit almost anything, but my great fault was being rather too light-hearted in the saddle, as I liked when I got the chance to let the horses have their heads, and put two days' exercise into one. Mr. Johnsonsone saw I had it in me to make a very smart groom, and he would have been my friend if I had let him. But I was that independent and uppish that I wouldn't be spoken to, and kept myself to myself, and took no notice of what he said, till he nearly gave me up as a bad job. I was always having rows with the other grooms, who were very jealous of me, as the master liked me to ride the best horses at exercise, approving of the way I handled them ; and many's the thrashing they gave me. I was too small to give them a beating, but I always managed to mark my man, and make him sorry that he had tackled me. I was for all the

world like a fox-terrier amongst a pack of hounds. My society, as you may guess, sir, was not very welcome of an evening in the saddle-room, so I used to creep off into the stable or hay-loft and play my tin whistle, being fond of music like my poor mother, sir, and I used to watch the ponies cock their ears and listen: it probably reminded them of the Hungarian String Band, when playing at Hurlingham in the height of the season. Our stable was always busy, and when we were not hunting we were poloing, and it was just before the polo season commenced, near the middle of March, and we had got up nine ponies. Some we had lately bought and had yet to try, and the others we had played last season, and they had been turned out all winter to rest their legs. Amongst the team of ponies there was a dark brown mare, who appeared to be particularly fascinated with my music. She was called "Lady Nicholas," and had the character of being a perfect little devil in the stable; she had savaged more than one groom, and if it had not been for her good looks and perfect symmetry she would most probably have been put under-ground. She was the terror of the grooms and helpers who had to dress her. They had rechristened her "Lady Nick." For shape, I never saw her equal: a splendid top, and a set of legs as clean as bars of iron. A head and neck full of fire and breeding, and a grand pair of shoulders. You want good shoulders for a polo-pony to turn and twist after the ball. She was never in condition, as she frightened them all at exercise to such an extent that they wouldn't try to ride, but only led her. His Lordship, however, liked her, because she was well up to his weight, and he took some carrying; and she was clever at the game when once she got started, and would follow the ball like a kitten: you could turn her on the top of a barrel, and you might have ridden her with a straw. But his Lordship could never get on her back unless she had one leg strapped up whilst he mounted. In the stable nobody couldn't do nothing with her, she was as clever at striking out with her fore feet as she was at letting out with her heels. If you so much as put your nose inside her box, she set on to squeal like a child, whisking her short tail the whole time, and showing the whites of her eyes in the most awful manner. It was a job for two or three to groom her, even when she had her head and fore-leg tied up; and once, when she had kicked her groom and he was laid up, she stood for three days without food or water, because nobody could get by her heels to feed her. She

became vicious I think through having her tail docked so short, late in life, and whenever they had to clip her tail or mane they had to cast her first in her box.

'I sat by this Lady Nick's loose-box one evening and played my music soft and low, not much louder than the chirp of a cricket. She cocked her head and listened, and then it was that our eyes met. "Your ladyship isn't vicious, not you; it's high breeding, that's what it is. You are a born actress I believe, and if only I could find out the key to your character you and me would be friends."

'Seeing that she looked pleased and amused, I slipped into her loose-box, for I didn't know what fear was.

"Not so quick, you young imp!" she appeared to snort, and her heels and the straw were flying about the place like lightning. Being small, and of course less than a big one to hit, she missed me; but says I to myself, "Tummas William, right you are; but if you intend to remain so, why you've not a moment to waste!"

'I couldn't immediately get out of the box, but, fortunately, an old besom was at hand—not a long swisher, but a used-up stubby one. I seized it, and runs it up against her side, and pins her to the wall. "Would you then, my Lady? Quiet, can't you?" I said. I talked quite serious and polite to her; no bad language, which must have impressed her; at any rate she stopped kicking, evidently astonished that one so small had her in a corner, which gave me the opportunity to slip out of her box like a shot.

'The next morning when they went to groom her they found three big scratches on her side. "What's done this?" they said, and the helpers were questioned, but they could make nothing of it, and I didn't help them by mentioning old stubby besom; you see I was a bit artful!

'In a day or two, when the coast was clear, I went again to her box, and played some light cheerful music. "Sorry I had to run away in such a hurry the other day, my tragedy queen," I said. "Your style of acting was a bit too kick-about for my taste; I don't admire ballet dancers, so gently, please your Ladyship." I walked quietly into her box with the old stubby broom in my hand, but it took me some time, and I kept talking to her and never took my eyes off her, and she never took her eyes off me. I would not budge an inch, and she did not like to come against old stubby besom again. I got to her head, and

put a large lump of sugar into her manger. I did not fret her by staying long, for I argued it this way: "You are like me, a high-spirited one, and you won't like the idea of having to give in any more than I should!"

'But at the end of a week I could go into her box without much fear, and she allowed me to stroke her down.

'Now that I had conquered her, unknown to anybody, the idea struck me that it would be a great score to have the sole charge of her and groom her. So one morning as I was passing her loose-box, and three men were hard at work dressing her, I said to Mr. Johnsonsone,—

"When them three grums want to take a holiday I'll do that job for them!"

"What are you talking about?" said the biggest helper; "do you want to get killed?"

"Come, my boy," said Mr. Johnsonsone, "don't waste time talking nonsense."

"Ah," I said to the three helpers, "you measures me in your own quartern!"

"It would have to be a very deep one to measure you," said Mr. Johnsonsone.

"I'll cut that young cock's comb as sure as my name's Jim," growled the head stable-lad, indignantly.

"Let him groom the mare by himself, and she'll save you the trouble!" laughed the helper, who would not at all have minded giving up the job.

"That's fair enough," I replied. "I'll give her a chance to do her worst to-morrow morning, if you like."

"All right, young 'un," laughed the helpers; "and we will look on whilst you gets what you ask for."

"No," I said, "I did not bargain for that; the sight of your pretty faces staring in would be enough to make her kick the horn off the moon. Mr. Johnsonsone shall lock me in her box, and I'll groom her by myself."

'Taking the old stubby broom with me into her box next morning, and starting to whistle one of her favourite airs, I had a very much easier task than the others imagined I should have; and when I was let out of the box at the end of the hour, Mr. Johnsonsone congratulated me on the mare's appearance.

'I did not groom her in public until I had made firm friends with her, and I could astonish the others by letting them see me dress her, with her four feet on the ground. Then I exercised



"The dark pony in blinkers was pretty sure to be able to gallop away from everything."

W. B. D. D.

her regularly, and got her as fit as a fiddle. Of course she gave me trouble sometimes, but I was very patient and never let her get the better of me.

‘His Lordship was exceedingly pleased, for now she was as hard as nails, and he played her two days a week all the season. She was considered one of the smartest ponies in the club, and looked as flush as a game-cock just turned out of a bag, and we could have sold her for almost any money, if anybody had cared for the job of riding her.

‘His Lordship generally “played forward,” and his style of “riding out” was very determined; but the pony, you see, was a good topped one, and when he was mounted on her, everything else had to give way.

‘It was a sight to see his Lordship get away with the ball, and hear his ringing “who-whoop!” for when he got excited he screamed like a jay. He never spared his ponies, and if he was riding Lady Nicholas, the dark pony in blinkers, he was pretty sure to be able to gallop away from everything. You may be pretty sure, sir, that a pony with temper is always a game one.

‘His Lordship then took a fancy to try her quality in the public show-ring, and as I had found out at exercise her aptitude for jumping, she was put into a jumping class for hacks. Although the show was a county affair it was always patronised by a large and fashionable audience, and his Lordship, who brought a very large party just after the polo season, was very anxious to see his much-talked-of kicking pony do well.

‘I don’t think that the little mare ever looked better, she was light-hearted as a kitten, and keen as mustard to jump. Everybody admired her, but then nobody but his Lordship and me backed her, or she would soon have been at her old tricks and set them down.

‘It was a strong class, and took us a long time to jump it off, but she flew her fences like a bird, and all I had to do was to sit and steady her, and she easily won the blue riband.

‘It was a very popular victory with the on-lookers, and I sailed down again to the water-jump to show her off as the prize winner. She jumped it with lots to spare and galloped on, pulling me nearly out of the saddle. Each time as I had turned her she had wanted to fly the water-jump again from the landing side, but I had not let her, of course. Now that she had won, and the crowd were cheering me, I got excited and lost my judgment, and turned her again at the jump.

"Stop! stop, Tom! Tom!! whatever are you doing?" rang out Mr. Johnson's voice from the crowd. The warning only raised the devil in me, my blood was up, and muttering under my breath, "I'll soon show them what she can do," I galloped the mare at the jump, with the water now on the take-off side. She got her strides in beautifully, but slipped on the trampled wet mud as she was taking off. We fell on the fence and rolled over. I just remember seeing the mare spring up again, but looking as if all the life and spirit was gone out of her, and one of her fore-legs an unmistakable swinger. When I came to again, I found myself in the saddle-room at home, surrounded by my fellow-grooms, who were talking about me.

"He's artful, he is!" said one; "he thinks that he can escape a thrashing by shamming sick!"

"Well, he's bound to get the sack," said another, "and without a character, I should not wonder. Serve him right, too; we've put up with his nonsense, I'm sure, quite long enough. I knew what he was all the time, and now he's showed us, and gone and killed the mare."

The grooms were fearfully jealous, and had never forgiven my success with the pony.

The thought of the consequences attending my folly was nothing compared with the overwhelming feeling of having killed my idol, so I said nothing; all the kick seemed to have gone out of me. But as soon as possible I wandered to the loose-box she used to occupy. Taking the old stubby besom I went straight to his Lordship's room.

"My Lord, I've come to make a clean breast of it, I can't bear it no longer," I said, half hysterically, for the fall had pretty well knocked me silly.

"A clean sweep, I should think. What do you mean by coming to my room armed with a besom?" said his Lordship, who could have knocked me into a cocked hat.

"I beg your Lordship's pardon, but I feel as if I was quite light-headed and didn't know where I was to a field or two. The grooms said I should be kicked out so I thought I would come and tell your Lordship all about the little mare."

"I think his Lordship was rather amused at being treated as if he were a kicker after I had told him the story of the old stubby besom; but when I had done he proceeded to dress me down proper, for he was a keen judge of character, was his Lordship, and saw that this accident might be the making of me.

"Now, look here, my boy," he said. "I intend that this accident shall be a lesson to you through life; it has all been brought about by your insubordination and pig-headedness. Because you are clever at your profession, you think that you can set at defiance the orders of my most trusted and valued servant, Mr. Johnstone. You are mistaken, boy; it was my intention to dismiss you summarily, the moment it suited my convenience to do so. Mr. Johnstone has continually had to complain of your conduct!"

"Yes, my Lord, he's done his level best to break me in, but it's too late now; I must chuck it up and enlist!"

"No," said his Lordship, commandingly. "I give you another trial, boy, and be guided by Mr. Johnstone. The mare, I am glad to say, has not been destroyed, but has been put into slings, and her fetlock, which was broken, is set in plaster of Paris."

"I never felt such happiness in all my life; I could have cried for joy.

"She will never run again, but I hope she may be sent to the stud, and I shall expect you to be her attendant, in addition to whatever work Mr. Johnstone may set you to do!"

"I thanked his Lordship over and over again. I was that tractable Mr. Johnstone might have driven me with a pack-thread if he had liked.

"The sight of the little lame mare must remind you that you have promised me to turn over a new leaf. Now go!" concluded his Lordship.

"That incident was the turning-point in my life. I went and begged Mr. Johnstone's pardon for my past conduct, and he was very nice about it; I nursed him through his last illness, and now he's gone I'm in his place. I still attend to that little mare as if she were a duchess, and she gets the best of everything, and she's presented us with a whole tribe of polo ponies."

"Is she vicious now?" asked Mr. Maddar Brown.

"No, sir; you see she's cooled down, and now she is older she finds it takes too much out of her. But she do like to tear my shirt and coat sometimes. You see what she has done whilst you have been painting her and me, bandaging of her old game leg. I thought I wouldn't tell you before you had finished that this was "Lady Nick," because you might have been a bit nervous at having to sit near her heels."

SONG OF THE LEASH.

By 'SAPLING.'

'ER the moorland wild and lonesome

Winter's wind pipes loud and shrill,

Blithe the gunner in the woodland,

Brave the sight on yonder hill

Of the files of moving scarlet,

Where those stirring notes resound,

While the joyous rout rides onward,

Vot'ries keen of horse and hound.

Chorus.

But the moorland uncumbered by hedge or by tree

Is the scene for the bound of the greyhound so free.

How they silently glide with their thoroughbred stride!

How they wrench! how they turn! and career in their pride!

On the turf they hail the Derby,

And when harvest-fields are clear,

This the gunner deems the climax

Of the joys of all the year.

So, soon after bonny Yule-tide,

Men who love the leash are seen

Must'ring where the wide-spread acres

Own the sway of Cross Moleen.

For the moorland, &c.

Sefton's plains can show a record

Of the heroes of the past;

Gone their slippers, but their vict'ries,

Sung by coursing bard, shall last.

Yea, the running of fleet Muriel,

And the feats of Bed of Stone,

With that bonny bitch Lobelia,

Speak in no uncertain tone,

That the moorland, &c.

Staunch McGrath must claim the laurel

Won for that famed Irish peer,

Fairly termed the King of Coursers:

Well-shaped dogs to him were dear.

Neat-ribbed fliers, low in shoulder,

With broad chests the leash to strain,

Reared full oft in rustic hamlets,

Framed to run on Hightown plain.

For the moorland, &c.

Oh, how bracing seem the breezes,
Sweeping freely o'er the field!
What a thrill to hearts of sportsmen
That loved cry, 'So-ho!' doth yield.
How the turns that mark the struggle,
Breathless hold each courser keen,
Till the judge, his bright flag waving,
Marks the winner, ends the scene.
O the moorland, &c.

Though some sage old dogs 'run cunning,'
When they've gained a taste for hare,
May their place be filled by others,
Staunch of breed and trained with care.
Still may leash to lord and peasant
Pass the merry hours away,
Puss be game to lead the chevvy,
Saplings reared with power to stay.
O the moorland, &c.

THE SQUIRE'S DAUGHTER.

By 'WILF POCKLINGTON.'

BY Jove, I'll do it! there is no other way of wooing her;
so to the winds with common sense and propriety.
Recommend me for the post at once, dear Jack, and
put me down your debtor for life.'

The speaker was Tom Rainforth, a hair-brained young lieutenant in Her Majesty's — Foot, and the person addressed was Jack Fortescue, Esqre., landed proprietor and gentleman-at-large. The facts of the case at issue were these.

At the hunt-ball recently held in the quaint old Lincolnshire village of Reevesby, Tom Rainforth had the misfortune (or good fortune, according to the reader's opinion) to meet and fall desperately in love with Blanche, the pretty daughter of Squire Everingham, who, being an eccentric gentleman, deemed every young man a fortune-hunter, and systematically closed his doors in the face of the numerous admirers attracted by his daughter's pretty face and her ample *dot*.

Tom had fared no better than the others, but, on confiding his sorrows to his friend and host, they had between them matured a scheme of romance and impudence unparalleled in these prosaic eighteenth century days.

Squire Everingham was the right-hand man and general estate manager to Lord Braintree, an office his family had held for several generations ; he was, besides, a landowner of no small extent, and a magistrate, hence his popular title of 'Squire.' He resided some few miles away on the Lincolnshire coast, in a moderate-sized village, which consisted of a single long, straggling street, a church, a chapel, and some venerable relics of the Saxon and early Norman eras. The Squire occupied the great white house at the corner of this road, patronised the entire village, and was, of course, looked up to with unquestioning reverence by the inhabitants. He, however, never mixed with them socially, and as his nearest neighbour, whom he honoured by admitting to a questionable equality, lived some miles away, the Squire and his daughter lived a somewhat secluded life, broken only at rare intervals by visits from lady friends to her, and by his journeys to the market-town or the magisterial bench.

Popular as the Squire was in the village, he had one blot on his escutcheon in the eyes of the hunt (to which he subscribed liberally), and in those of the few county families in the neighbourhood ; and that was, that he had become accustomed (since the loss of his wife) to drink, 'not wisely but too well,' and as may be supposed he incurred serious censure for a habit not tolerated in these days. In other respects the Squire was still the cheery open-handed man as of yore ; his kitchen-door was ever open to the hungry, and his famous brown October ale was dispensed freely to callers and strangers. The only other change was in his appearance ; the tall lithe figure became slightly bowed, the hair tinged with grey ; his riding in the field became reckless, and irregular, and (greatest crime of all in a hunting country), he commenced to 'crane' at his fences, and knock his horses about for faults due to himself. He also grew quarrelsome, and newcomers not feeling the same amount of respect, or being under the same obligation as the old inhabitants, several brawls had taken place, and in one or two the Squire was severely handled.

With increasing excitement and irritation of temperament he grew discontented with the slow rate of speed obtainable from his horses, and invested in several fast trotters, and went whirling from place to place to the danger of every one he met. This was endurable in his sober moments, but when, after a court meeting at the neighbouring town, he insisted upon taking the 'ribbons' himself, thrashing the horse into a gallop, going over or through everything in his way, it became no joking matter.

On one occasion, returning home at night, he drove over a stone-heap and spilled himself and groom into a broad and deep drain that ran by the roadside ; on another he collided with his own gate-post, smashing the cart to matchwood and breaking his groom's ribs, being himself dragged into the yard in consequence of having become entangled in the reins, whilst the horse was kicking and plunging in all directions.

Grooms soon grew scarce ; finally, no one could be found to take the place : then, for some time, the Squire drove himself, and after having been several times fined for furious driving by his brother-magistrates, they determined to put a stop to the growing scandal by declaring to him their intention of sending him to prison for a month if he appeared before them again. This had the desired effect, and set him seeking everywhere for a steady, capable groom.

Such was the state of affairs at the time of the hunt-ball ; and the intention of Tom Rainforth, as declared at the opening of our story, was to offer himself for the post, drive the Squire, keep him (if possible) sober, and, most important of all, do his best to win the heart of the fair Blanche, who was already more than well-disposed towards him.

After some preliminary correspondence an engagement was contracted, Tom entered into his duties, and became the Squire's shadow. If any one took offence at the Squire's unseasonable remarks he was always on hand to smooth matters down, and for a time all went well. Gossips noticed, however, that Miss Blanche took a greater amount of horse exercise than usual, and that the new groom was invariably in attendance, whilst it was said that her latest 'fad' was always to see her horse cleaned every morning.

Truth to tell, she recognised Tom the very first morning, and threatened to denounce him to her father ; but Tom overcame her scruples, and of their mutual understandings, love-makings, and its attendant pleasures and pains, I am no envious chronicler : suffice to say she was pleased to keep his secret, but, woman-like, delayed her happiness, and, notwithstanding all he had undergone to win her, declared capriciously she would never accept him unless he accompanied her as groom to the opening meet of the season.

Poor Tom ! he had not counted upon a girl's mischievous fancy, and sorely against his will he bowed to the inevitable.

Downward steps are not easily retraced ; so the conduct of

the Squire proved, for after a brief period of good behaviour he gradually grew worse and worse, until he was nearly, if not quite, as bad as ever. Do all he could, Tom could not keep him sober. Once, after attending one of the meetings, he drank rather more heavily than usual and insisted upon driving home himself; which he did at a gallop, escaping injury by little short of a miracle. This resulted, however, in a brief illness, which gave Tom a chance to think the matter over, and evolve a scheme to put an end to these midnight dangers.

He had a brown-tanned leather rug made for the horse, that extended from the saddle to the tail, where it was fastened to the crupper, and loosely girthed underneath; being nearly the colour of the horse, a casual observer at night would not notice it. He then took the horse out every night to exercise instead of in the morning, and by the time the Squire recovered Tom was ready for him.

During these weeks Jack Fortescue made one or two surreptitious calls, and in his quiet way had much fun with Tom; but he only received his rallies with a grim smile, saying, 'Let those laugh who win, and the game is in my own hands if I have but patience. You shall dance at my wedding in the third week of October.'

'And see you as groom to the Lady Blanche at the opening meet—eh, old man?' responded the imperturbable Jack.

'Well, yes, I suppose so! But you will get no laugh at my expense, I promise you.'

From this time, strange to say, no further accidents occurred when the Squire drove home; the horse went quietly along, taking no notice of his furious jerking of the reins, or vigorous thrashing with the whip, beyond a slight jump to left or right as the whip struck its head or neck. When the Squire railed at it for not galloping, Tom declared that it *was* galloping full speed, and that *he* could scarce hold on; and the Squire, in doubt, usually accepted his word.

Meanwhile the horse grew more and more steady, as though it had taken its master's character in hand and was in league with Tom to save the old gentleman from further disasters.

The opening meet drew nigh, and Tom was daily teased by his *fiancée* as to what he would give to be let off. Tom laughed and said,—

'Nothing! You keep your promise to marry me the third week in October, and I will ride to the meet as your groom.'



"Is that so?" said Tom; "then here goes."

A. C. Stoddell

see page 187.

Blanche looked wistfully at him, half regretting her bargain, but too high-spirited to let him off his penance after once imposing it.

At last the day arrived, and at 10 a.m. Tom, duly attired in a green coat with brass buttons, a broad leathern strap round his waist, cords and boots, and hat with a cockade, was to be seen holding two horses at the front door. The Squire had an attack of gout and could not go.

Daintily attired in a dark-blue riding-habit Blanche was lifted to the saddle, and, with Tom riding decorously in the rear, passed out of the gate. Once, however, in the green lanes, he ranged alongside, but Blanche was in a dejected mood and scarcely spoke.

At last she said,—

‘Tom dear! it’s no use, I cannot do it. Go back and put on your own clothes; I will not make a public show of you: you have undergone enough for me.’

‘Nay! nay!’ laughed Tom. ‘A bargain is a bargain: you might want to cry forfeit to your own stake; and, dearest,’ lowering his voice, ‘I cannot let you do that now.’

‘No, no! indeed I will not! I will keep my word! But if you will not ride back and change that hateful suit I will turn back myself and forego the meet.’

‘Is that so?’ said Tom; ‘then here goes!’ And taking off his hat he drew out a velvet cap, and unbuckling his belt and throwing off the green coat, he sat revealed in the Melton Hunt colours. Tossing the coat and strap after the hat he lifted her hand, and kissing it said, ‘And do I still ride as your groom?’

‘Yes.’ said she, with a merry laugh; ‘as my bridegroom.’

At the meet speculation was rife as to who Tom was, and owing to Jack Fortescue the secret leaked out. The Squire only stipulated that Tom should still drive him, and gave his consent.

At the wedding breakfast Tom was asked the secret of his success with the Squire’s horse; he laughed, and said, ‘Well, I trained him to stand the whip on that leather rug he always wore at night; and I had two pairs of reins, one running from the bit along the shafts round to the back of the cart where I sat; and the other pair, which the Squire used, were *buckled to the collar*.’

Of course a tremendous laugh was the result of this disclosure, and although against himself, the Squire joined in it,

and proposing his son-in-law's health asked, 'Who shall say the days of chivalry are past?'

Tom and his wife still live happily together, but the Squire was shortly after the marriage gathered to his fathers, having been killed in the hunting-field, and a brass tablet records his manifold virtues in the village church.

JUNGLE JOTTINGS.

A RUN OF BAD LUCK.

By 'DOOKER.'



MOST sportsmen have *red-letter* days impressed on their memories, when everything went right, the powder was straight, and the beat had been well managed; or, they had taken a 'first spear,' and had returned home with their well-earned trophies, pleased with themselves and the world in general: but how few of us ever remember, or care to remember, the days when everything went wrong, when we missed an apparently easy shot, or when by neglecting some apparently trivial precaution—in fact, by committing that mistake so common to most Britons, viz., being too confident of success—we returned home sadder but wiser men, disheartened and disgusted, and took a dismal view of things in general, and sport in particular! Let me ask you, kind reader, to mount that excellent 'crock' 'Fancy,' and accompany me to a spot called Jámnee in the Central Provinces of India. It was one of the meets of the Nagpore Hunt Club, and on the day in question a merry party of ten sportsmen were assembled after dinner round a camp-fire of blazing logs, enjoying the pleasant after-dinner pipe or cheroot. Shooting and pig-sticking yarns were the order of the day, and the result of the day's sport—a very good one—was being discussed.

'Yes,' remarked Parsons, one of the party, 'we *have* had a clinking good day, and everything seems to have gone right; no horses ripped, no beaters hurt, and the pigs have been most obliging in taking the line we desired; and, for a wonder, no mild Hindoo, or intelligent agriculturist, has headed them. A better day than the last time we were here.'

'Why, what happened then?' asked Taylor, a new arrival,

whose regiment had, only a short time previously, marched into the cantonments where the head-quarters of the Hunt were situated.

‘Well,’ returned Parsons, ‘many of you fellows will remember the day, and YOU in particular, Renton,’ he added, with emphasis, turning to a tall, dark, good-looking man; ‘but as four or five of you have only lately joined the Hunt, if you like I’ll tell you all about it, only let’s light a pipe first.’

The pipe being lit, and Parsons’ faithful ‘boy,’ a youth of some fifty summers, having, at his master’s bidding, brought him a good stiff glass of hot whiskey and water—for the night was chilly—he began:—

‘You must know we had our usual ten-days’ Christmas meet last year, and had tried all the places we have beaten on this trip with varying success, and arrived at this spot on Christmas Eve. On the following day we beat the same “bheer” we had such good runs from to-day, but somehow all the big boars got headed and broke back; one fellow as big as a donkey, and as grey as a badger that we had a short spurt after, vanishing into the big “sind bund” just as Renton and Harris got up to him. As you may imagine we were all very much put out at our bad luck, but after “tiffin” we cheered up a bit as old “Mānaje” came up with the welcome intelligence that he had marked a big boar into a small “rumnah” about a mile off, and that he had posted a man in a tree to watch him. Of course we were all eager for the fray and anxious to retrieve the morning’s failure. We were soon posted and the beat began. All went well and out came our friend, and after a moment’s hesitation to see if the coast were clear dashed away across the open, and we were all soon racing after him. The boar, however, having been allowed a good start, made the most of it, and managed to reach, untouched, a clump of bushes, through which ran a very small nullah. It seemed impossible he could escape, and we were all in high glee. We were standing round the bit of covert waiting for the beaters to come up and turn him out, when “Jiggles,” Renton’s little black terrier, who had got loose somehow, came bundling up and promptly went in at the boar. He was careful, however, to keep at a respectful distance, and not get within reach of his tusks. We could hear “yap-yap-yap” and the surly grunt of the boar as he charged hither and thither after his nimble tormentor. Suddenly the noise ceased and out

came the boar, just behind Renton, whose horse's quarters were turned towards the covert, and ripped him badly on both legs above the hocks. Having done this he was back into his stronghold in a jiffy. Jackson, who was not riding that day (being out after floriken) seeing us assembled, came up with his gun, and it was suggested he should fire a charge or two of snipe shot into the bushes, and by this means try and induce our friend to break. But it was useless. He blazed away, but of course couldn't tell where the boar was lying, and consequently no notice was taken of the salute. As this boar evidently meant mischief, of course we wouldn't let the beaters go in, so Renton determined to go back to camp, get his gun and one of the commissariat camels (we had three or four with us to carry the Hunt kit), and ride him into the cover, and as when mounted he would be in a more elevated position, and so better able to tell the whereabouts of the boar, tickle him up with a charge of shot. Well, off he went, but during his absence the boar tried to sneak away. Green and Hetherington, however, saw his move, and "went" for him promptly. He charged Green, knocking him and his horse over, ripping the latter below the knee and in the chest; then turned and charged Hetherington, who speared him slightly. He then turned short back and nipped into the covert before any one else could have a shy at him. Presently we saw old Renton coming along on his "ship of the desert," all legs and wings, and on his arrival he gallantly rode him into the bushes, which were some four feet high. This dodge was successful, for the boar, evidently unaccustomed to see such a strange animal, came straight at the camel's legs; and although he received a couple of charges of shot in his face *en route*, knocked him over, ripped him badly, and sent Renton, gun and all, flying; then away he went, followed by the rest of us. He was twice speared after this, but getting into a small "sind bund," which communicated with a larger one, he somehow gave us the slip and we never saw him again. His charge at the camel was within a few yards of where we were all standing, and after his headlong rush out of the bush, where he must have been lying, he reared up so straight to reach the camel, which was jumping about among the bushes half frantic with fear, that he succeeded in ripping it in what in a horse would be termed the stifle-joint. The poor brute, in its fall, broke a hind leg, and consequently had to be shot.'

'But weren't *you* hurt, Renton?' observed one of the party;

‘and was there no row made about the missing camel when you returned to cantonments?’

‘No,’ replied Renton. ‘Strange to say, I wasn’t a bit hurt, barring having my body made into a sort of pincushion for thorns, and denting one barrel of my gun, which, luckily, I had discharged before the upset. As to the camel, we arranged that rather neatly. We met a lot of Afghan fellows going down to Hyderabad with dried fruits, Persian cats, &c., and we bought one of their camels and branded him with the Government mark, taking care to give the “oont-wallah” (camel-man) a good tip to hold his tongue on the subject.’

‘By Jove,’ said Taylor, ‘that *was* a scuffle with a vengeance! But I am afraid you fellows must have used some awful language! That boar must have been a plucky brute, and as cunning as he was courageous. He deserved to get off.’

‘Talking of unlucky days,’ interposed Green, ‘do you remember that day at Nundoorie, Renton?’

The sportsman addressed being engaged in quaffing a grateful ‘peg’ could only nod assent, so Green continued:—

‘I really think it was the most determined run of bad luck I ever knew. First we beat the “sind bund” which contained a whacking boar, and is, as you know, not more than two hundred yards long and some fifty yards wide, and although we were at it from 11 a.m. till 5 p.m. we couldn’t get him to break. Of course we did not ride *into* it, but we turned a herd of buffaloes in, then tried dogs, gave him some charges of shot by men posted in trees, then fireworks; in fact, everything imagination could suggest, but all to no purpose; and, eventually, we had to give him up and return homewards. The evening was closing in and the moon was beginning to rise, but we determined to beat one little ‘bheer,’ about one and a half miles from camp, on our way. I had sent my horsekeeper home, and was walking along to the beat some distance behind the rest of the party, leading my horse—the old grey I was riding to-day. Seeing the beaters were being formed up, I put my foot in the stirrup to mount, and then——. I remember nothing more till I awoke next morning with an awful headache, my right shoulder being stiff and painful, and from the bandages in which I was swathed I must have presented much the appearance of a mummy. On inquiry, I found that my horse had galloped into camp by himself, and though I had been searched for everywhere, I had not been discovered till about 10 p.m., when

a grass-cutter returning from a distant village had stumbled across me, lying apparently dead in the "bheer," and had given the alarm. I had been picked up insensible, and during the night, I believe, jabbered a lot of nonsense; and a doctor, who was one of our party, pronounced my injuries concussion of the brain, with the accompaniment of a dislocated shoulder: but how it happened I don't know to this day. I can only surmise that the old grey, who, as you know, is rather fidgety to mount, chucked up his head and caught me on the forehead as I was mounting, and then dragged me, or else he must have put his foot in a hole and come down with me. Well, to add to this, my "boy" had his eye put out by the bursting of a soda-water bottle, that he was placing in wet straw to cool for my dinner, and another of our party got badly stung in one of his feet by a scorpion. A pretty good chapter of accidents, wasn't it?

'Yes,' replied Taylor, 'you certainly had a run of precious bad luck, unbrightened by even a gleam of success. As our talk to-night seems all to run upon pig, suppose I vary it by telling you of a bad day, or rather days, I had once with a tiger, though I had the luck to bag him in the end. But, perhaps,' added he, 'you fellows are too tired and would rather be off to roost?'

A chorus of 'Go on!' and 'Fire away, old chap!' was the only answer, and tumblers being refilled, and fresh pipes and cheroots lighted, he began:—

'Some two years ago Clayton of my regiment, who, as you know, prefers the rifle to the spear, and I were out on a "hot-weather" trip in the jungles round Chanda. We hadn't had much luck, and had only bagged some four tigers, a bear, and three or four bison, when on the 18th of March we got "khubbur" of a tiger near Pallasgaon who had been playing Old Harry with all the village cattle. Accordingly we marched there, and had a number of "hailas"* tied out. The next morning we had a "kill," and proceeded with some forty beaters to roust our friend out. The covert was a thin strip of jungle, very narrow, and composed of bastard teak and ebony-trees, with jamun bushes and grass about three feet high, that fringed the banks of the Wein Gunga River, now nearly dry, with the exception of a pool or two of water here and there. The distance between the

* 'Hailas' are young buffalo *bull* calves, that can be bought in every village for a few rupees. These are tied out as baits in different parts of the jungle. If one is killed the tiger is known to be near, as he seldom goes far away from the kill, but generally gorges and lies down.

banks was some sixty yards. The first day the brute *did* us in every way, jumping up just where he wasn't expected and breaking back through the beaters, dodging from one side of the river to the other, and always where the guns were not posted—in fact, playing a regular game of “catch who can!” Day No. 2 he pursued much the same tactics, except that once in breaking back through the beaters he gave an ugly claw to one poor wretch who didn't get out of his way quickly enough. The third day was a repetition of the other two, with the addition that during the last beat, late in the day, he coolly crossed over the river-bed in sight of our horse-keepers, who were waiting for us with our horses, killed a “haila” that had been incautiously left out, and sneaking along the bank with his victim, had so terrified our horses that they broke loose, and were not caught for some hours; and mine had, by the appearance my almost brand-new saddle presented, been amusing himself by rubbing himself against almost every tree in the jungle, and selecting the thorniest bushes through which to pursue his mad career! Well, we got so sick of three days' unsuccessful beating that we gave it up, and moved on to fresh ground. In a month's time, after varying success, we passed Pallasgaon on our return journey, and hearing our friend was still in the neighbourhood, and up to his old cattle-lifting games, we determined to have another try for him, and “tied out” accordingly. The next day the “kill” was duly reported. He wasn't above taking the goods the gods provided, or, in other words, the fatted calves *we* supplied. The brute! This day he was up to his old games, and though we tried every dodge to make him go straight, even to putting men in trees to shout and turn him, he didn't care a rap. Not he! He merely stared at them, and showing all his teeth, with that nasty, savage, snarling curl of the upper lip a tiger indulges in, passed on, as if *he* knew well enough they hadn't rifles in their hands and couldn't harm him. In fact, he *did* us again, and we returned to camp in no enviable frame of mind. Whilst sitting at dinner outside our tent that evening we heard a great chattering, accompanied by much shrill wailing and lamenting from female voices, and presently were informed that one of the men who had been beating for us had been badly mauled by the tiger. “And please, Sar,” added my “boy,” “all village people saying that man surely dying, and his wife plenty rupee wanting.” Of course, off we started to ascertain the truth of the story. On arriving at the spot where the crowd was assembled, and forcing

our way through, we saw extended on a "charpoy" (native bedstead) a fine, tall Gond (whom I had several times noticed very active during our beats, rallying his more timid comrades, and exhibiting much pluck in beating out any extra thick piece of cover), lying apparently dead. Feeling his heart beating, I sent for some brandy, and forcing his teeth open with a knife I poured some drops of the liquid down his throat, and had his feet and hands well rubbed. To make a long story short, he gradually revived, and on examining him I discovered that his right arm was fearfully chewed up, and his side and one leg covered with blood. Giving him what restoratives we could, and washing and dressing his wounds with carbolic acid, we sent him home, promising to come and see him the next day. This we did, and found him wonderfully recovered, and able to account for his accident, which happened in this wise:—During the last beat he had somehow lost his little hatchet, that every Gond carries, and having a pretty good idea where he had dropped it, went back after the beat to look for it, thinking the tiger would be miles away. He had searched for some time unsuccessfully, till, on nearing a patch of jamun bushes by a pool in the river-bed, the tiger sprang out, knocked him over, and, seizing him by the arm, began shaking him savagely. With wonderful presence of mind he had with his other hand torn off his "puggree," and stuffed it into the tiger's mouth, who thereupon dropped him and disappeared into the jungle, shaking and worrying the yards of rather dirty and unsavoury cloth! The Gond then made his way back, but when close to the village had fainted from loss of blood, and had been accidentally found by some mhowa-flower gatherers returning home, and by them the alarm had been given. We could not afford to spend another day beating for this brute, as our leave had nearly expired, but I determined to go out early before we left to examine the length of his strides in a series of springs which he had made in crossing the river in one or two places. With this intention I had started at daylight, and having satisfied my curiosity had been induced to follow a herd of spotted deer which I came across, and out of which I bagged a fine stag. This made me later than I had intended to be, and it was getting pretty hot when I turned on my way back to camp. When about half a mile therefrom I stopped for a moment by the edge of the river, and, leaning my rifle against a tree, began to fill a pipe. The bank on which I was standing was just above a pool of water, which was some



And fire my
left barrel"

nine feet below me, and the grass and jamun bushes growing on its side overhung the water, and formed a dense, cool shade. I was thinking, "What a place for a tiger!" when my attention was attracted by a slight ripple on the water, the sort of rings one sees made by a duck swimming gently about. Peering down, I could not at first discover anything, but at last I saw *something white*, and *then* a pair of eyes fixed glaringly on me! You can fancy what a great thump my heart gave. Keeping my gaze steadily fixed, I reached behind me for my rifle, which was luckily quite close; then, quick as thought, put it to my shoulder and banged at the dark mass, which I could now indistinctly discern. As I jumped back and on one side, to get clear of the smoke, there was a splash, an angry roar, a fearful commotion among the bushes, and the next instant I saw the tiger's (for such it proved) head and forepaws *on* the bank, and almost at my feet, struggling to get up, just as you often see a dog trying to scramble over a high wall and prevent himself from falling backwards. Such an incarnation of rage as the brute presented I shall never forget. He was only some eight feet from me, so I aimed between his eyes and fired my left barrel. As I did so there was the sound of a body falling, a heavy splash, then all was still, and I knew I had bagged him! Wasn't I just pleased? and wasn't poor old Clayton savage at having missed the scuffle when he heard all about it? On examining the spot I found that the bank was hollow where the tiger had made his spring. This had doubtless saved *me*, as he had missed his footing with his hind legs, and was trying to regain his balance when I gave him the contents of my second barrel. My first shot had missed him clean. He was evidently an old warrior, for his body had several scars, doubtless inflicted by fellow-tigers who objected to his abominable temper. The Gond survived, and probably the fact of knowing his enemy was dead assisted his recovery, although when I saw the poor fellow last year his arm had withered up, and he had lost its use.

'It certainly was, however, *very* satisfactory getting the brute after four days' beating with such intolerable bad luck—which, I think, you'll all acknowledge. Now I'm off to roost, so good-night, everybody.'

This yarn closed the symposium, and soon the camp was hushed in silence, only broken by the occasional neigh of a horse, or the weird howl of a jackal, and, shall we add, the snore of some weary sportsman?

TOODLEBURY'S TANDEM TEAM.

By T. DYKES.



HERE is scarcely a country town in England or Scotland of any importance which has not its annual cattle-show. This bucolic holiday may well be described as the annual open-air outing of the natives—a never-dying phrase with the editor of the *Cabbageville Advertiser and United Greengrocers' Gazette*.

These little country gatherings, as is well known to the electioneering wire-pullers, afford excellent opportunities for cunning candidates to address the electors, no matter in what interest; a judicious mixing up of turnips, potatoes, and politics, generally ending in a promise to support the speaker through thick and thin. One of the original promoters of the annual cattle-show of the town of Tilburn-in-the-Fields was Edmund Toodlebury, familiarly known as Teddy Toodlebury, the eldest son of the local brewer, an extravagant spendthrift of a rich father's fortune, and, as many wise people acquiesced in saying, a young fool. Youth has its follies and extravagancies, however, and possibly young Toodlebury was no more foolish than many others of his fellow-companions. But his follies were on a somewhat big scale.

I'll tell you what he said to a young friend of his,—

'The Show is coming on—the Annual Cattle Show—and I want to cut a dash. Bill Thompson's great on hens, and says his Brahmapiootras will beat anything that the world can produce. But hang fowls! I never cared for them with their feathers on.'

'Then go in for pigs, Teddy,' said Joe Jephson, the gin-distiller. 'I know where you can get a pair of the most beautiful Berkshires a man ever clapped eyes on.'

'Hang pigs, or stick them if you like! I'll have nothing to do with the pork business. Fancy me before the crowd, replying to the toast of "The most successful exhibitor in pigs!" No, no, Joe! Leave the pigs to old Noggins the baker. It's in the family.'

'Then go in for sheep, Teddy,' said Billy Sharp, the solicitor's son, 'and show yourself: you're bound to win.'

'Maybe you'll judge, Billy. Lawyers are generally pretty fair judges of a good fat *fleece*.'

'One for Ted! One for Ted!' was the call. 'Toodlebury's *had* you fairly,' said the Chairman of the little social parish club, which met each evening in the smoking-room of the Tilburn Arms Hotel.

'No, boys,' said Teddy, feeling not a little elated at the smartness of his own retort and power of repartee generally; 'I'm going in for the driving-match. General Baird has offered a prize for the best tandem team, to be driven by the exhibitors. Sir Henry Nichols has made a bet that he will win it with his two bays. Lord Herringcob has sworn to win it with his greys, and I——'

'And you'll run the big blue roan dray-horse and the van-pony against him, Teddy,' said Mr. Sharp, anxious to renew the chaffing match, seeing that he had had by no means the best of it in his last passage of words.

'Exactly, Sharp! and you'll come with me as an empty beer-cask if you like. We're not ashamed of our trade, William,' said the other, apparently ruffled just a little in temper. 'Well, to tell the truth,' he said, continuing his remarks, 'I've made up my mind to win it, even if it costs me the best part of five hundred pounds. But the question is, Where can I get a team—a really first-class team—between this and the Show day?'

'There's no difficulty about that,' said George Golddust, the banker. 'Write to London to any first-class dealer, and he'll let you have the horses in no time. Strapson, in Piccadilly, for instance; if you only wire Strapson he'll find them for you, if you send him the money.'

'Would it do to wire him? There's no time to be lost.'

'Wire him by all means, and I'll wire that your credit is good for any amount to the London and Parochial, which you can refer him to, and you are all right. They can get you anything in London, from white mice up to white elephants, if you can only give them the money.'

'Then I'll wire at once; by Jove, I *will*! Ring that bell, please, will you? Waiter! A telegraph-form, please: quick! The Post Office shuts at eight, and if Strapson gets it to-night he may arrange to look after my team at once. What shall I say?

"EDMUND TODDLERBURY,
" *Tilburn-in-the-Fields.*

"To STRAPSON,
" *629 Piccadilly, London.*

"Buy for me, as well as can, under five hundred pounds, best tandem team procurable. Must be good performers in a ring. Reference, Piccadilly Branch London and Parochial Bank."

'There, you fellows! look at that, and then preach to me about your pigs, and your hens, and all that! If that doesn't fetch something to cut a dash with at the Show next Wednesday then my name is not Teddy Toodlebury!'

'Bravo, Teddy! Bravo, Toodlebury!' resounded on all sides. 'Hurrah for Tilburn! Success to you, old boy! I hope you'll win! Come, we'll have one glass more for one more toast. "Success to Toodlebury's Tandem Team!"'

The toast was drunk with full honours, and three times three were given in a style which quite alarmed the other inmates of the King's Arms Hotel.

CHAPTER II.

THE next night there was again a full muster of the Tilburners, as the natives of the little town were termed, in the King's Arms smoking-room; and, with pipes aglow, the talk of course ran on the coming Show, and more particularly as to Toodlebury's tandem team and its chances of success.

'Toodlebury will keep his father's mash-tubs full, and no mistake,' said Bill Sharp. 'Imagine giving five hundred pounds by telegram to a London horse-coper to go and spend it at the nearest sale-yard on a couple of screws! Wait, and you'll see what they'll be. I've had some experience of horse-dealers.'

'Let Toodlebury have his fling,' said another. 'His father made it out of bad malt and over short measure, and his son Teddy will make it go in no time. He's a plucky one, so let him have his fling.'

Just at this moment in walked the redoubtable Edmund Toodlebury himself, flushed and excited-looking, and carrying in his hand a telegram.

'Hey, I say, can any of you boys read French? I've a telegram here from Strapson of London about these horses, and there's some French words in it. Here it is:

"STRAPSON,
"Piccadilly, London.

"To E. TOODLEBURY,
"Tilburn-in-Fields.

"Have secured pair splendid *haut école* horses for five hundred. Will send on to-morrow morning by Midland Railway, nine fifteen."

'Now what I want to know is, what are *haut école* horses? I asked the Governor, but all he said was, "What's the use of my spending money on your education and you can't make out two French words?"'

'*Haut Ecole* is a place in France where they brade them. I've often heard towld of them,' said Tim Tierney, the Irish farrier from Dublin. 'Me father used to shoe for Mister Hengler's circus when 'twas in the Rotunda performin', and they had some of them. They're a moighty fine breed of horses, they are, Mr. Toodlebury. There's a dash o' show and style about them. A dear breed of horses, too, I should think.'

'Then they'll be the right sort to win with, you think, Tim?'

'Right sort? Bedad, I should think so! They're the best-bred horses in France. I've heard Mr. Hengler say so himself.'

'And piebalds, too—think of that!' said Toodlebury, excitedly. 'I'd like to see Lord Herringcob's face when he sees me cut into the ring with my pair of *Haut Ecole* horses from France. Won't he be wild, eh? Don't I fancy I hear Sir Henry Nichols say, "Beat by a young beer-cask fellow, who knows no more about horses than a hedgehog!" Ha! ha! I told you, boys, I would do it.'

'But will they be here in time?' asked one.

'Well, I'll just have them here and no more. The fact is, I want to do the thing nobby. Everybody will be waiting to see my team, and they will wait. I'll put them together at the station, and drive 'em right into the ring just as the judges have taken up their places, and sweep them right round in tip-top London Four-in-hand Style. Oh, I'll fetch 'em, and no mistake!'

'And who are to be the judges, Misther Toodlebury?' asked Tim Tierney.

'Oh, Lord Cobbinpond and Sir Michael Markitdown. Good men both of 'em, and know a good turn-out as well as anybody. Oh, I'm not afraid of the judges in the slightest! Good-night, I'm off!' And off he went to tell everybody about his *Haut Ecole* horses.

CHAPTER III.

It was a nice morning in May. The sun shone brightly, and the larks soared high and sang sweetly. There was a crowing of cocks, a lowing of cows, a bleating of sheep, and a neighing of colts in the public park at Tilburn-in-the-Fields. It was the morning of the Annual Cattle Show, and the inhabitants of the little town were all cheerful and in joyous mood. Country cousins crowded in from far and near, business in the town was suspended, and every one, down to the youngest school-boy, was to be found on the Show ground. Banners waved from the

roof of the Grand Stand, the stewards rushed about with coloured rosettes on their coats, and all were bright and merry as a wedding party. None were happier or more jolly than young Toodlebury.

'The piebalds, the *Haut Ecole* horses, my boy, are on the road!' he said to every one of his friends. 'The cart is at the station, and I'll just put 'em to and drive 'em into the ring. Lord Herringcob and Sir Henry Nichols think that it lies between them, but they're mistaken, as you will see. Piebald *Haut Ecole* horses, my boy, at 250*l.* a-piece! Think of that, eh, for Tilburn-in-the-Fields!'

Class by class the horses were judged in the horse-ring in front of the principal stand, and then came the call from the Steward of the Ring, 'Make ready, Class XIV! Best tandem team, owners to drive!'

The first to respond was young Lord Herringcob, who, with his own fair lady by his side, and a pretty little tiger with his arms folded, drove in his greys stylishly and gracefully. Sir Henry Nichols, a haughty-looking old baronet, followed with his beautiful bays, whose every movement seemed the poetry of motion indeed. 'Where's young Toodlebury's?' everybody was asking after the two teams had been driven twice round.

'Here he comes!' was the answer, as the crowd of young Tilburners rushed to the main entrance-gate. 'Here he is, by Jove, with his pair of beauties!' Yes, sure enough, there was the young brewer driving a pair of piebalds, which stepped in a style which had certainly never been seen in Tilburn-in-the-Fields. They had long flowing manes and tails, and were harnessed in white and gold, forming a turn-out which seemed to give an immense amount of satisfaction to the general crowd. Lord Cobbinpond, the judge, and his *confrère* in the ring, Sir Michael Markitdown, seemed to find it a good subject for laughing at; for they looked carefully into the legs of the horses, and found them all knuckled and twisted. Lord and Lady Herringcob also seemed to be enjoying the fun of the thing, and young Toodlebury did not seem to relish some remarks which he could not help overhearing.

The first team to come under inspection was Lord Herringcob's, which trotted round twice in a slow, natural style. Sir Henry Nichols followed, and then there was a cheer, and the band, most of the members of which were employés in his father's brewery, struck up merrily.

'Rum-tum ti-tum tum-tum tum-ta!' went the music of the band.

'Rum-tum ti-tum tum-tum tum-ta!' went the horses, putting out their forelegs straight and dancing as neatly as a ballet-girl; whilst the crowd applauded, and Lord Herringcob roared till he almost fell from his seat. The second round the band changed their music to something which is played in an old set of Lancers Quadrilles, and then, to Toodlebury's astonishment, the two horses began to make horrible twisting, dancing movements.

'Stop that band, will you?' he shouted, whilst the sweat hung in drops on his brow.

The band stopped, and the moment the music ceased the leader wheeled into the middle of the ring, walked on its hind legs up to the judges, bent down, and bowed.

This was too much for Toodlebury. He yelled on his groom to jump down and seize their heads, leaped from the cart, and buried his head in a huge tumbler filled with brandy and soda-water in the nearest booth.

That night he wired an indignant telegram to Strapson, calling him a swindler, and telling him to return his cheque as he would send the horses back. The reply was by letter. It was as follows:—

'PICCADILLY, *Thursday*.

'DEAR SIR,—Your telegram received. I deal only in Circus horses, and so bought a pair of valuable *haut école* horses from Mr. Hengler. You said you wanted them good in a ring, and the horses I sent you can do anything—dance to slow music or quick music, go through the Lancers, fire a pistol, and steal a pocket-handkerchief. If you let me have them back, carriage free, I will let you have two hundred and fifty pounds back.

'MOSES STRAPSON.'

'E. TODDLEBURY, Esq.'

'He'll have them by the first train South,' was the remark to a friend. 'But what a fool I've made of myself! Now what are *haut école* horses, I wonder? Tim Tierney says they're a French breed.'

'French breed be hanged!' was the reply. 'It's a Circus-going expression for highly educated horses, and highly educated horses they are, I've no doubt.'

'I dare say,' was the reply; 'but they won't suit me. They go back to-night.'

Back to London they did go, and that was the last seen of Toodlebury's Tandem Team.

AFTER FEROX.

By R. M. ALEXANDER.



AVE you ever killed a ferox?' I asked my chum, Freddy, as we sat over our coffee after dinner.

'No,' he replied; 'I never heard of one. Do you shoot them with a rifle or a scatter-gun?'

'Duffer!' I answered hastily. 'They're fish, and mighty lively fish too when you get hold of a big one; they are stronger than salmon, and report has it that they run up to 50 lbs. or 60 lbs. in some of the lochs.'

'By Jove! let's have a go at 'em,' said Freddy. 'Where are they to be got?'

'I believe Loch Ericht is supposed to hold some monsters, and if you like I will arrange for ten days if you care about roughing it, as we shall have to camp out at the far end of the loch, which is eighteen miles from the nearest station, and quite in the wilds of the Highlands.'

'That will suit me down to the ground,' replied Freddy; 'I should like nothing better; I am sick of being civilised, and it will clear off the effects of the London season.'

Next day I wired to the landlord of the hotel at Dalwhinnie and engaged a boat, with two of the best boatmen on the loch; then I hired two tents, and laid in an ample store of potted meats, soups, beer, whiskey, and tins of tobacco, cigars, &c; procured two waterproof roll-up beds, and all necessary cooking utensils. We each took a trout and salmon-rod, and various lures for trout and *salmo ferox*, in the shape of flies, phantom and angel minnows; also tackle for live-bait.

On a Monday, in the month of June, we arrived without adventure at Dalwhinnie, and found the landlord ready to receive us, also the two boatmen in attendance; and in answer to our inquiry if we could get to the far end of the loch that night, a distance of eighteen miles,—

'Hoot yes! if we're spared,' replied Angus Munro, the senior boatman, a queer individual, who looked as if he did justice to the 'wine of the country.'

Jock M'Lauchlan, the other boatman, did not seem so

hopeful, as he wisely remarked that the 'clouds were comin' up frae the sou' west as black as thunder, and we might just hae a bit *squaal*: however, there would be no harm in making the attempt.'

So we agreed to do so, and having bought some bread, butter, eggs, &c., from the landlord, we had the boat laden, put up our rods, as we determined to troll the whole way for ferox, as well as try a cast now and then for trout; and, after having had a parting dram, shoved off amid a shower of good wishes.

When we had made about seven miles, without having anything to show in the way of sport excepting a few small trout, the wind began to come down the loch in fitful gusts, the clouds grew blacker and blacker, heavy drops of rain fell pattering on the surface of the water, and then the threatened storm burst upon us in all its fury. We had several times to take shelter under lee of the shore, and began to have doubts about getting to our destination that night; but Angus was still hopeful, and more so after a liberal quantum of 'ta whuskey.'

There seemed to be no tiring these two hardy Scots; it was with difficulty we made them give up the oars to us, as we wanted to warm ourselves. Although it was the month of June, the rain driving in our teeth made it bitterly cold.

In a short time we had quite enough of pulling a heavily laden boat against a perfect hurricane. Angus and Jock again took the oars, but after half-an-hour's hard work we found we were making little or no headway, and as it was getting dark, and the sky showed no signs of the storm abating, we made up our minds to pull to the north shore and locate ourselves for the night. Truly glad we were to get into a fairly sheltered bay, and, having landed, proceeded to get the tents ready for pitching. All this time the rain was coming down in torrents, and Freddy looked at me with anything but a happy expression. I tried to cheer him up, although far from enjoying it myself.

We chose a site for our camp, and told the boatmen to pitch their tent, when Angus remarked: 'Dod, Sir, we ken naething about it; we've never seed a tent in oor lives afore.' So we were obliged to put theirs up for them, which we did after a fashion, and then proceeded to pitch our own, which was done with difficulty as the wind had shifted, and our position turned out to be not so sheltered as it might have been.

We obtained our cooking utensils and everything we wanted for the night, then, as we were soaked to the skin, got into dry flannels. Having lighted our spirit-lamp and broken open two tins of soup, we soon had some heated up; and with a kettle boiling for hot toddy we sat down to our first meal on Loch Ericht, and certainly did justice to it. We could hear the boatmen talking in their tent, Angus remarking: 'Mon Jock, this is the queerest hoos I think I ever was in; it's no muckle better than an umbrelly, and no sae handy!' 'Yer richt,' said Jock; 'and I think the twa gentlemen had better hae stoppit at the hotel, whaur they could get comfortable beds: but they Englishmen are ae daein' daft-like things.' And so on, till we called them to come for their rations.

We gave them some soup, bread, tinned beef, and half a bottle of whiskey, and offered them the kettle to make toddy; which was declined with thanks, as they did not want to spoil 'the gude whuskey.'

Both being very tired we agreed to turn in after smoking a pipe. We then put on a night-cap in the shape of another tumbler of toddy, blew out the lights, and tried to compose ourselves to slumber. The storm, if possible, grew worse, and what with the noise of the rain on the canvas and the howling of the wind sleep for me was out of the question; so I lit a candle and also a pipe, and it was lucky I did so, as the ropes of the tent had tightened with the wet and in a short time our pole would have snapped: so I had to turn out and slacken the ropes and get into bed again, considerably moist. After tossing about for some time I managed to doze off, but could not have slept long when I was awakened by Jock putting his head in, and saying in a most rueful voice, 'Please, Sir, oor tent is blawed doon!' It was very trying to have to turn out and help them to put it up again, but it would hardly have done to have had these two men in our tent, as their wet clothes would have thrown off steam, and that not of the pleasantest.

Without disturbing Freddy, who had fallen asleep, I fixed up the tent, and told Angus and Jock if it blew down again they must put it up for themselves and not disturb me again. So once more I tried to sleep off the fatigues of the day. The next morning turned out bright and fine. When Angus came for orders we asked him how they got on through the night; he said, 'Oor d—d tent blawed doon again and we couldna put her

up, so we had just tae hap oorsels in oor blankets and lie under the dyke.' They did not seem much the worse for it.

After a good breakfast we loaded our boat again, and made another start for our destination.

The view, looking down the loch, was grand in the extreme, the ragged heights of Ben Alder towering above us on our right, the principal mountain on Sir John Ramsden's deer forest. We soon passed his shooting-lodge, most picturesquely situated at the foot of Ben Alder. We took a turn round the bay below the house, and as the trout were rising freely we managed to secure a good basket, but none very large.

When we had got about four miles further on, the boatmen called our attention to two eagles poising themselves above some rocks, half-way up the mountain side. We watched them for some time, and at last one of them folded its mighty wings and came to the ground as if it meant to dash itself to pieces, and then soared up again into the air, and with the aid of our glasses we could see the struggling form of a rabbit in its talons. It was a pretty and interesting sight, and one not often witnessed now-a-days, as these noble birds are very few and far between, and are only preserved in the deer forests. On the sky-line of a deep corrie, a little further on, we saw a herd of deer, headed by a splendid stag, wending their way leisurely along to their pasture-ground.

At last we reached the spot where the boatmen advised us to pitch our camp, viz., at the mouth of a burn, and a short distance from a keeper's lodge. The situation was most picturesque: we were surrounded by ranges of black, rocky mountains, streaked with rushing streams, fighting their way through peat and boulders to the dark and sombre depths of the loch.

Having fixed on a good landing-place, we unloaded our boat and pitched our tents. Angus came up to me and said he and Jock would prefer to sleep in a shed up at the keeper's lodge than to run the chance of having 'their hoos doon again about their lugs.' I was only too pleased to consent, as we were enabled to stow all the cooking utensils, &c. into their tent, thereby giving us more accommodation.

A message to the keeper, asking him to come down and have supper with us, brought that worthy—and he did justice to it, as did also both Angus and Jock; and when we sent them off (to bed, I was going to say, but I'm afraid they had no such

luxury) the three went up the hill to the lodge arm-in-arm, the blind leading the blind, and singing 'Auld Lang Syne' at the top of their voices, each a bar behind the other. But that didn't matter! They were happy!

The next morning we rose early, and after a bitterly cold swim in the loch, and breakfast, made a start after ferox. We trolled carefully round the end of the loch, but without success, and felt much disappointed. We then got our trouting-rods into action, and had splendid sport; for about two hours the common trout fed greedily, and we made a fine basket. We killed more than we could possibly consume, so returned to our camp. I amused myself sketching, while Freddy and the boatmen went off to try and find some frogs, as we decided to set some trimmers for ferox that night, determined to get hold of some by fair means or foul. After grovelling about for some time they came back, having only secured two. These we tied by the hind legs to large double hooks, attached to a good length of strong line and gimp, fastened to some large lumps of cork, and then rowed to two likely-looking spots, and set our lures for the night, and returned, feeling confident of a run in the morning.

We were, however, again doomed to disappointment; for on going in search of our trimmers the following day they were nowhere to be found; so, evidently, they had been carried off by some heavy denizen of the loch. We rowed up and down both shores, carefully scanning the surface of the water with our glasses; but, as the water was disturbed by a sharpish breeze, it was difficult to discern any object floating at a distance, so we had to give up our search, and took to trolling with large angel minnows. We made the men row slowly, so as to sink the minnows as much as possible. When we had gone about half a mile the point of my rod was suddenly bent by a slight pull. I jumped up, but touched it not, knowing that ferox will follow for a long way, playing evidently with the bait before taking it properly. How they manage this, with the minnows bristling with hooks, I can't imagine, but so it is. Presently down went the point of my rod again. We were all excited now; but I told the men to row on steadily, which they did about fifty yards or so, when down went the point again, this time right into the water, and whirr went my reel as I grasped my rod. 'Hurrah!' we were into him at last. Angus and Jock understood their work,



Freddy soon had the
gaff into him

and turned the boat sharply round, and followed as hard as they could pull. I had strong tackle, so let the fish have the full weight of the butt, and after a splendid burst hauled him up steadily; but on the boat approaching off he went again, as if he meant to go to the other end of the loch without stopping: but again I hauled him up, and he began to fight desperately for freedom, and then lay exhausted and motionless on the surface of the water. I gently pulled him to the side of the boat, and Freddy soon had the gaff into him. He was not a heavy fish, but was nearly as broad as he was long, and turned down barely twelve pounds. However, he was our first ferox, so we drank to his health and started again. This time it was Freddy's turn, and he managed to kill a pretty little fish of about five pounds, and that was all we killed in the ferox line that day.

Next morning we went off after trout, and had fair sport. While fishing one of the bays Angus jumped up suddenly, exclaiming: 'Yonder's one of our corks!' And sure enough he was right; so off we pulled, and on getting close to it down it went, showing, of course, that a fish of some sort was hard and fast. We watched for it to rise again, which it did about eighty yards off, and again we gave chase: this went on for a long time, so we knew we were after something big; at last the rushes grew shorter and shorter. I was ready at the bows of the boat, and eventually got hold of the corks and held on like grim death; but by this time the fish was 'dead beat,' and I hauled him to the surface, where he was gaffed by Freddy. He turned down 19 lbs., but was not a beauty to look at. All the same we thoroughly enjoyed our run. The other trimmer we never found, although we stayed on the loch for a whole week.

We were obliged to leave sooner than we intended as our supply of beer and whiskey ran short, and Angus and Jock were not so amusing without it!

THE MERRY, MERRY MAIN.

By 'TOM MARKLAND.'

AT Melton town in days gone by,
 Whene'er the widening plain
 Had donned its winter robe of white,
 The hunt must there remain.
Now when the valet brings the news,
 'No hunting, sir, this morn,'
 The fixtures are the stations twain,
 And Clubland draws the Quorn.

Chorus.

But that was the day when the old town was gay
 In sunshine, in frost, or in rain;
 The morning saw gunners and traps in full play,
 And the eve was alive with the Main.

Beside the lane that leads the way
 Towards the old Beck Mill,
 The Cockpit stood upon the brow
 Of lowly Timber Hill;
 And thither came the lord and squire,
 With men of less degree,
 To fight the 'Merry, Merry Main,'
 The old-time sport to see.

Chorus.—For that was the day, &c.

Black-breasted reds and duck-wing game,
 With Sarsfield's conquering strain,
 Were wont to take by turn the field
 And strew the pit with slain.
 The corpses of the vanquished birds
 Lined all the neighbouring street;
 The air was rife with vaunting crows
 That hailed each fresh defeat.

Chorus.—For that was the day, &c.

Sir Harry held the foremost rank
 In this famed British sport—
 Sir Harry Goodriche, Baronet,
 A good old English sort;

And when his champions took the field, '
With shining spurs bedight,
On bended knee behind each bird
You'd find old 'Cocker' Wright.

Chorus:—For that was the day, &c.

Of all the men to bind a spur
Old Cocker was the best,
And ere grim Death cried 'Habet!' Wright
Had feathered well his nest.
At times to match the 'Melton swells'
The 'Lambs' and 'Brummers' came,
But mostly took their champions home,
Or dead, or winged, or lame.

Chorus:—For that was the day, &c.

The Cock-fight, like the 'noble art,'
Lies now 'neath legal ban,
But when men mean to have a sport
They seldom want a plan.
The only change their law has made
Is simply change of scene;
The public pit has passed away,
But not the sport, I ween.

Chorus:—For that was the day, &c.

'Tis hard to see the good they've done
By snubbing English sport,
For when we want to praise a man
We call him 'Good Old Sort.'
I'd love to hear the clarion shrill
In frosty days again,
As noble hunters crowd to view
The Merry, Merry Main.

Chorus.

For that was the day when the old town was gay
In sunshine, in frost, or in rain;
The morning saw gunners and traps in full play,
And the eve was alive with the Main.

SIR GERARD'S DOUBLE EVENT.

By 'UMBRA.'

HERE were three men who, in their own minds, had determined to marry Lady Mary Claverings, who was considered to be one of the most beautiful women of the day.

The first was Henry Sleaford Blambers, tenth Earl of Darville. The young Earl (he was only five-and-twenty) was the last surviving member of a very old family. His frail physique seemed to denote that the family stock was so old as to be nearly worn out. His existence, for a time, was merely a nominal one, for he literally did nothing; there was not enough vitality in him to urge him to go wrong, nor even to do much good. But circumstances created a change in his way of life, for he became acquainted with Sir Gerard Wingford, and the baronet managed, so far as one subject was concerned, to awake the young lord out of his lethargy. Sir Gerard persuaded him to purchase a few thoroughbred horses. This investment brought forth a latent quality which must have lurked in his Lordship's mind, for he soon began to evince immense delight, although in a languid kind of way, in winning races, and pocketing a few hundreds of pounds through his betting transactions.

The second man was Captain Frank Clifford, of Her Majesty's Guards. He was one of those bright young fellows who never carry a care upon their minds. Every day in the life of Frank was a day of enjoyment, and for him it might be truly said that the sun shone on both sides of the hedge.

The third aspirant was Sir Gerard Wingford, of whom mention has already been made. Sir Gerard was an older man by some ten or twelve years than either Lord Darville or Frank Clifford. He was well versed in the ways of the world, and imagined that he well knew all the weak sides of poor human nature. If his views of mankind were judged harsh and cynical, he would reply that they were merely the result of experience. If taunted with being sceptical as to the purity of another man's motives, he would ask which carried the sway—self-interest or unselfish kindness. The world, he said, was comprised of knaves and

fools, and it was hard to say which predominated. He cared not to know of another man's troubles; every man, he averred, had quite enough to do to make matters comfortable for himself. The world to Sir Gerard was like a peep-show, and the men and women in it only puppets designed for his own amusement, and he strove to move them here and there as he deemed best for his own ultimate object. Money he regarded as the philosopher's stone, and the veritable elixir of life. Money would prolong one's days, and make those days enjoyable; without it, he would argue, life would be a miserable state of bondage, and not worth having. Money is the golden key by which all gates become unlocked, and all doors unbarred. The touch of gold is magic, said Sir Gerard, and men, and women too, succumb to its all-prevailing influence.

It was now the autumn of the year, and the mind of Sir Gerard had foreshadowed and elaborated a combination which was to result in his winning the next year's Derby, and, immediately after that, in his marrying Lady Mary Claverings. This he regarded as his 'grand double event.' Lady Mary's marriage-portion he knew was a mere bagatelle, probably not more than ten or twelve thousand, and he was not a rich man himself—far otherwise; but if he won the Derby, and that prize he considered within his reach, he would then be comparatively a rich man.

He now became aware that the Countess of Vernham, Lady Mary's mother, was favouring the suit of the young Earl Darville, and not wishing to have his long-cherished plan frustrated, it became necessary for Sir Gerard to somewhat precipitate matters. He decided to propose to Lady Mary at once; the marriage could be delayed until after the Derby—he could easily manage that. He had no intention of being encumbered with a wife until he possessed ample means of his own, and bar accidents, he was certain that his colt, Astyanax, would win the next Derby. He therefore proposed to Lady Mary, and, much to his astonishment and chagrin, was rejected.

In the meantime, these matrimonial projects had become known to Frank Clifford, and he adopted, under the circumstances, the worst possible plan for his own success. Now, he was the only man of the three for whom Lady Mary cared a straw, therefore Frank should have secured his success with the lady herself; but instead of doing so he rushed headlong into the enemy's camp, for he made known his suit to the Countess,

Lady Mary's mother, with the dire result that he was not again permitted to see Lady Mary.

Late that autumn, Lady Mary Claverings became the Countess of Darville.

II.

IT is now the Monday week before the day appointed for the Derby to be run. At Tattersall's, and at all the betting-clubs lying eastward of that classical establishment, a very heavy commission is being executed for Menander, the Earl of Darville's Derby horse. Menander, a bay colt by the Greek, dam Athenæ, combined some of the best blood of the generation in his veins. The commission was entrusted to the hands of an experienced manipulator, and simultaneously with the money being invested in London, the same was being done in all the principal provincial towns in England, wherever bookmakers flourish. The young Earl sauntered into 'Tattersall's and stood by listlessly. When the members realised the fact that a very heavy commission was being executed, and under the auspices of the cleverest turf tactician of the day, the excitement became intense, the only unconcerned man in the room being Darville himself.

Hitherto, the favourite all along had been Sir Gerard Wingford's colt Astyanax, over whose success Sir Gerard stood to win nearly a hundred thousand pounds. Sir Gerard had faith in Astyanax, and also in his own turf diplomatic skill. Still, he had learned from the young Earl himself that Menander was an exceptionally smart colt, and now, having witnessed the execution of the Earl's large commission at Tattersall's, he deemed it certain that the Earl imagined Menander would win the race. Now, Sir Gerard was resolved that Menander should not win; at all hazards he determined to prevent that; he had an old score to settle with Lady Mary, and he meant that score to be wiped out to his own heart's entire satisfaction.

The Crafton is the most fashionable club in London for men like Darville, Sir Gerard, and Frank Clifford. In the evening, Sir Gerard and the young Earl met in the clubroom, and their conversation, naturally, turned upon the approaching great race.

'And so,' carelessly remarked Sir Gerard, 'you give promise of providing us with a Derby favourite?'

'I mean,' replied the Earl, 'to provide the Derby winner.'

'No,' said Sir Gerard, 'not this year, Darville; you forget Astyanax.'

'Astyanax may be second,' rejoined the Earl, 'but Menander is a horse of exceptional merit, and I would advise you to have a "monkey" on him at least.'

'Astyanax beats him in their places for a thousand!' cried Sir Gerard.

'Make it two thousand to one, or ten thousand to five, the fair current rate of odds, and I accept the bet,' said the Earl.

'Done!' cried Sir Gerard. '10,000*l.* to 5000*l.* on Astyanax against Menander—one, two, three.'

Darville nodded in his accustomed *nonchalant* manner, and then noted down the bet with his gold pencil-case in his small gilt-edged betting-book. Sir Gerard was also careful to book the bet. Two other men, well known to Sir Gerard, joined them, and a considerable amount of banter was indulged in with regard to the Derby. Champagne was freely drank, and the bantering continued. So certain did Darville consider Menander's superiority to every other horse in the race, that he laid Sir Gerard several very heavy bets against Astyanax; and if the latter won the race the Earl would be indebted to Sir Gerard over 50,000*l.* On the other hand, Menander's winning would entail a loss of about 25,000*l.* on Sir Gerard.

III.

PUGILISM as known to our grandfathers is defunct for ever. There was something heroic in two athletes—like gladiators in Rome's palmyest days—pitting their strength, endurance, and skill against each other, and characteristic of the tenacity and bulldog courage which made our forefathers successful in their ventures all over the world. But when prize-fighting became a medium for winning money solely, and winning at all hazards, fair or foul, its days were doomed. When rowdyism and ruffianism in their worst and most violent aspects were allowed to rule at the ring-side, the fate of the ring became sealed. There are men in London at the present time termed ex-prize-fighters who possibly never fought with their naked fists inside the magic circle of the ropes. These men are no more of the same stamp as the old worthies than the proverbial chalk is like cheese. Those men were really ornaments to their chosen profession. These are hangers-on to the ragged skirt of pugilism,

and are little better than arrant bullies. Sir Gerard was in the habit of employing one of these so-called ex-prize-fighters to keep touts and watchers off his training-grounds. This man was known as Mike Borker—a broad-set, flat-nosed, beetle-browed fellow, whose build certainly denoted strength if nothing else.

Now, Darville had spoken to Frank of his Derby horse, Menander, in such glowing terms, that the latter backed him for a considerable amount ; but as the colt had never run on a public racecourse he had not been seen by Frank, but his enthusiasm was so aroused by the Earl's eulogiums, that he asked permission to inspect the colt in his stable, to which the Earl readily assented.

Frank had one close friend in London, Ned Clavell, with whom he had been on intimate terms since they were boys together at Eton ; and who now accompanied him to Newmarket.

Ned Clavell was a shrewd man of the world, well acquainted with Sir Gerard Wingford, and was aware in what capacity he employed Mike Borker. They arrived in Newmarket on the Thursday before the Derby, and both were immensely delighted with the appearance of Menander, who was a bay colt sixteen hands high, and possessed all the points which constitute a first-class thoroughbred. The small and handsome head, high withers and long sloping shoulders, muscular arms, strong loins, broad haunches, big knees, and well-formed fetlock joints.

It was their intention to have returned to London on the Friday evening, but as they were strolling through Newmarket in the afternoon Clavell happened to glance up a by-street, and there he recognised Mr. Mike Borker, in conversation with whom was Joe, the stable-lad whose especial duty it was to look after and tend upon Menander. Mike's back was partly turned towards the High Street, therefore he did not perceive Ned Clavell ; nor did Frank Clifford observe Mike and the lad until Ned gave an involuntary start, which caused him to glance round in the direction in which the latter was looking.

'Frank,' whispered Clavell, 'we will at once return to the hotel. There's mischief brewing.'

Seated in the coffee-room of the famous old Rutland Arms, Clavell's face assumed an unwonted expression of seriousness. He knew that all Sir Gerard's horses were trained in the south of England, therefore he concluded that Mike Borker was in Newmarket on some particular business.

'I don't pretend,' said Ned, 'to be acquainted with all the mysteries appertaining to the Turf, but I have heard of strange things happening in connexion with racing matters. You saw Borker and that lad together—now what object has brought the man down here?'

'I can't imagine,' replied Frank; 'unless he is here on a similar errand to our own.'

'Men like Mike Borker don't come to Newmarket when there are no races on, unless they have a special mission. Mike is a bird of evil omen!' said Clavell.

'What do you mean?' asked Frank.

'Mike,' continued Clavell, 'is employed by some one, and he is purposely sent down here. Then comes the question, Why is he in close conversation—up a narrow, by-street—with the lad who has charge of the Derby horse, Menander?'

'By Jove!' ejaculated Frank.

'Now, Frank,' said Clavell, 'do you stand to win much over the success of Menander?'

'Ten thousand,' was Frank's answer.

'And Darville—how does he stand?' asked Ned.

'I firmly believe that the horse's success or non-success will make or mar him,' replied Frank.

'So I imagined,' said Ned. 'Now, for your sake and the Earl's, and the Countess's, we will elucidate this mystery. By the way, Frank, do you ever see the Countess now?'

'I have not spoken to her,' replied Frank, sadly, 'since her marriage.'

'Forget her,' said Ned.

'Forget!' cried Frank. 'Is all human nature false? Is there no such thing in the world as friendship? Is virtue a myth? Love a wanton plaything? Are there no true hearts all the wide world over? Is no man's word sacred? No woman's love to be relied on? Are men and women no more than pasteboard puppets? Is life worth living?'

'My dear fellow,' said Ned, 'life's a chessboard, and if you make false moves you must bear the consequences. Remember the lines that wicked wag in your own club wrote on the marriage of Lady Mary:—

“Sir Gerard propos'd—was rejected;
Clifford blunder'd—was dejected;
The Earl came forward—was accepted.”

IV.

IN the meantime Mike and the lad Joe had adjourned to an inn up a yard, and were enjoying a most comforting and pleasant little dinner, consisting of two pounds and a half of beef steak smothered in fried onions. This was washed down by copious draughts of strong ale, and supplemented by big cigars and tumblers of cold water and whiskey.

'Now,' remarked Mike, 'you are a lucky chap, Joe. Your fortune's made. You'll be able to splice the gal of your heart, and take a nice little inn down here, and live all the days of your life a respectable and prosperous individual.'

'And how about you, Mike?' said Joe, grinning.

'Well,' replied Mike, 'I shall settle down in a London pub, and just have a couple of sovs. on now and then when you send up a good tip. You must not forget an old pal, Joe.'

'Never fear, Mike ; I ain't that sort.'

'Now,' said Mike, 'remember, Joe, you have had fifty. The remainder on the night of the race, and no word spoken !'

'Right !' replied Joe.

'I go back to London on Saturday night,' said Mike. 'Let there be no mistake. I begin to think you are fly. I believe in you, Joe.'

'You need not fear, old chum,' was the reply.

'Right you are then,' was Mike's response ; and their mutual agreement in a deep scheme of roguery was solemnly ratified in big drinks of whiskey-and-water.

Clavell's man-servant, Carter, was one of those demure, irreproachable, sedate, and highly respectable individuals who confer an air of stability on any master or family they may condescend to serve.

'I'll telegraph for Carter to come down,' said Ned ; 'no one could possibly suspect him of being a "sharp." He must assist in elucidating this matter.'

Carter reached Newmarket by midday Saturday. His lesson was soon taught him. He was merely to cajole the lad Joe into uttering his opinion of Menander. Before night came Carter had successfully performed his part in the drama. He managed to get into the lad's company alone.

'I don't bet much,' remarked Carter, jingling three sovereigns in the palm of his hand ; 'but I don't want to lose my money.'

I can't afford to do so.' And hereupon the innocent and unsophisticated Carter slipped two sovereigns into Joe's hand. The lad clutched the gold with the avidity of a pike swallowing a minnow, and then, looking into Carter's face, winked with one eye while he turned up the white of the other.

'Astyanax will win. Put on your fiver,' said Joe.

'How about Menander?' asked Carter.

More winks follow one another in quick succession; and then a hoarse, husky whisper:—

'He won't win. Mind, I've told you! By ——! give us another quid. The tip's worth a thousand. You seem a decent sort of chap, or I'd not have opened out. Not a word to a living soul, mind! *Put your fiver on Astyanax, and get a bit out of Menander!* Now for that other quid!'

Carter gave the artful Joe another sovereign.

Now, Carter never bet on a horse-race in his life. He would as soon have thought of joining the Salvation Army, and go bawling through the streets to the intense disgust of all sensible and decent people, as of making a bet. He faithfully repeated to Ned and Frank every word that had passed between him and Menander's unfaithful stable attendant.

'We cannot,' said Clavell, 'go to the trainer of Menander, because we have no right, and say to him that in his stable is a rogue and vagabond. But it is clear that the lad is suborned. Some person, through Mike Borker, has bribed the lad to —— What is the technical term, Frank?'

'Nobble,' replied Clifford.

'Just so,' continued Ned; 'that lad has been bribed to "nobble" Menander, so as to prevent the colt winning the Derby!'

Frank Clifford groaned aloud.

'We can only telegraph to Darville and request him to come down here at once. We must report our suspicion to him.'

The young Earl was in Newmarket by Sunday afternoon, and to him Clavell related all that had passed. The Earl clutched the edge of the table convulsively as, in great agitation, he arose from his seat, and with a trembling hand wiped the cold, damp perspiration from his forehead. When he sat down again his face was livid, and, for a few moments, his tongue paralysed.

The trainer of Menander could not at first believe the lad dishonest; but, on consideration, remembered that on several

mornings recently Joe had seemed flushed and tremulous, as if suffering from the effects of drink and want of rest. Joe was sent for, and accused of being acquainted, and having dealings, with persons with whom he ought to have no connexion. Joe's knees shook beneath him, but he managed to summon sufficient courage to shout, 'It's a lie!'

The trainer sent for the head stable-lad, a sturdy man of thirty, and in a few moments Joe was on his back on the floor; his legs and arms tightly pinioned, while the trainer's hands quickly emptied all his pockets. A greasy pack of well-used cards, a few letters in cypher, a few sovereigns in gold, and, in an inner waistcoat pocket, five ten-pound Bank of England notes. Joe was true to his false colours, for he resolutely refused to answer a single question or to speak another word. The Bank notes revealed the secret, so the lad was carefully locked up in a loft, and orders given for him to be watched night and day until the Derby was over.

V.

MIKE BORKER was down at Epsom early on Monday morning—*i.e.*, the Monday before the Derby—for the purpose of noting the arrival of the horses. He observed Earl Darville's horses arrive, but without the Derby crack, Menander. The trainer was not with the horses, nor was Joe amongst the lads. Mike chuckled joyfully. Menander, argued Mike, is still at home, in charge of Joe; and he and the horse will probably come to-morrow. Matters are evidently all right. Tuesday morning came, but neither Joe nor Menander. Still Mike was satisfied; where the horse is there's Joe, reasoned Mike; and the chances are that something has happened which will prevent Menander coming to Epsom at all. Tuesday evening came, and Mike made diligent inquiries as to whether Menander had arrived. No one knew. He scanned the lists of arrivals in the evening papers, but Menander's name was not there. When night came Mike got amongst the touts, but could hear nothing definite with regard to Menander; and then, lulling himself with false hopes, being so self-satisfied with the course of events, he got gloriously drunk, went to bed, fell into a heavy and lethargic sleep, and awoke late in the morning with a reeling brain and a splitting headache. Once thoroughly awake he made for the Downs.

'Had any one seen Menander?' eagerly inquired Mike.



ON THE HILL AT EPSOM.

CUTHBERT. BRADLEY

see page 219.



Some of the touts declared they had, while others averred they had not. Thereupon the ungracious Mike called the whole fraternity a parcel of fools and a set of confounded know-nothings. In return they were not slow to chaff Mr. Mike Borker. One individual said that probably the policeman in the street might tell him; another advised him to send a telegram to his old friend, the presiding magistrate in Bow Street, for the information he required; and a third suggested the Bishop of London as a likely person to enlighten him. And so Mike got chaffed and badgered until he fairly ran away in disgust.

The fact is, that Menander had arrived in London in a strange van, borrowed expressly for the purpose; and the van had travelled from the metropolis to Epsom by road, and had reached its destination on the Tuesday afternoon, at the very time that everybody was busy with that day's races. Very early on Wednesday morning Menander, covered with a strange hood and quarter sheet, took his last exercise gallop on the Downs, and passed unrecognised by any of the touts and watchers.

And still Mike was convinced that matters were eminently satisfactory. At one o'clock on Wednesday Sir Gerard Wingford and Mike Borker met, as prearranged. This was the day of the race. The face of Sir Gerard wore a careworn and anxious expression. Mike merely uttered two words, 'All right!' and Sir Gerard hurried from his presence.

And now the time fixed for the great race drew nigh. Menander's number (7) appeared upon the board; as also did that of Astyanax (13). Sir Gerard entered the saddling paddock and anxiously glanced around, but neither Menander, Darville, nor the horse's trainer, were there. This looks ominous, thought Sir Gerard, and they dare not let the horse be seen. The preliminary gallop past the Stand took place; Menander did not even join in that. Then Sir Gerard hurried into the large ring, and, intently looking through his field-glass, closely observed Mary, Countess of Darville, seated on a drag with Frank Clifford by her side. He observed that the face of the Countess was flushed with excitement and beaming with smiles; and he thought that she had never appeared more beautiful than she did at that moment.

With Frank Clifford, too, by her side! 'My time has now come,' muttered Sir Gerard; 'and your fall, my lady, will soon follow!'

Amidst all the hubbub and excitement in the ring Sir Gerard

stood there alone, cold in demeanour, reckoning on achieving a great victory and the consequent downfall of those persons whom the world deemed to be his friends. He was a self-possessed and reserved man, and a man of iron nerves. His schemes were deep and carefully planned, and, so he imagined, certain to be crowned with success. Yet, as he stood there alone, his heart beat with unwonted quickness, and his lips for a moment quivered and his cheeks blanched. It was like compressing the events of a lifetime into the space of a minute; and he wished the day were well over.

Suddenly a mighty shout, from thousands of voices, proclaimed, 'They are off!' and the deafening clamour of a moment before suddenly ceased. Every breath was held, and every eye turned in one direction, as the horses came thundering round Tattenham Corner. Soon a lynx-eyed bookmaker, as he looked through the powerful lens of his field-glass, shouted, 'Astyanax wins! Astyanax for a hundred!' A stifling sensation came over Sir Gerard, and a sinister smile hung upon his face. 'What's this,' exclaimed the same excited bookmaker, 'in light blue, yellow belt, and scarlet cap?' and a score of voices answered, 'Menander!' And now a deadly pallor and a cold shiver fell upon Sir Gerard, while a thousand voices shouted, 'Menander wins! Menander wins!' Sir Gerard's sight for a moment became dim, and he felt like a man about to fall, but quickly recovering himself he glanced on to the course just in time to witness a desperate struggle between two horses. He recognised the well-known colours instantaneously, for he saw Menander leading by half a length, and the rider of Astyanax putting forth superhuman efforts, combined with consummate skill in jockeyship, to wrest the victory from the big bay colt so resolutely galloping by his side. In another moment the two gallant thoroughbreds had passed the winning-post close together, and immediately shouts arose from all sides, 'Menander's won! Menander's won!' And then Sir Gerard turned, mechanically, towards the telegraph-board, and saw that the first number hoisted was 7, and the second 13. He now realised beyond all human doubt that Menander had won, and that his own horse, Astyanax, was second. In an instant of time that had been done which all time to come could not undo. He stood there, in that vast multitude, alone, a ruined man, without there being in the whole wide world a living human being to whom he dared appeal for sympathy or sorrow. He saw ruin

and utter and irretrievable disgrace before him. His limbs shook, and he reeled like a drunken man. He tottered to the refreshment-bar, drank half a tumbler of brandy, and then, with blasphemous curses on his lips, slunk away unnoticed, craven, and crestfallen.

The Countess of Darville, still on the drag with Frank Clifford by her side (it was in accordance with her expressed wish that he was there), was greatly excited. To her, Menander's success was an immense victory. Frank's seriousness was sombre.

'Why don't you congratulate me on Menander's victory?' she said to him, reproachfully.

'I do congratulate you with all my heart, Lady Darville; but the history of this Derby contains a secret which has yet to be revealed. We shall hear strange news in a few days. Still, for your sake alone, this is one of the happiest moments of my life.'

She seized his hand in her excitement with both her own.

'I cannot thank you too much,' she replied, 'and shall ever remember your words.'

VI.

MEN vary in the way by which they show their vexation when some great grief or disappointment comes upon them. A man will take immense pains to elaborate some deep scheme, and will bestow minute attention upon the smallest details, and is apt to become so absorbed in the contemplated success of his great venture as to cause him to overlook some one slight object which may prove to be the very keystone of the structure, and so, with the slightest puff of air, the whole, like a house of cards, comes tumbling down. A philosopher would smile, and pity his own forgetfulness; the irritable man would anathematise, and turn away in disgust; the too-sanguine man would lament over his failure, and declare that fortune was dead against him; the timid man would deem himself rash, and ever after avoid such schemes; the determined man would bear his ill-success in silence, and doggedly try again; the weak and foolish man would do much the same as did Mike Borker, curse his bad luck, and then endeavour to drown his sorrow in the bowl. Mike tried his best to wash all remembrance of the Derby failure from his mind by swallowing copious draughts of beer; and when malt liquor palled upon his taste he flew to

spirits, so that by the end of the week he had become half maddened.

If curses could annihilate a human being Joe would most certainly not have survived twenty-four hours after the Derby, for Mike was most sincere and liberal in the number he had bestowed upon the unfortunate Joe, who had been kept in durance vile until the day after the Derby. During the whole period of Joe's imprisonment the head lad had made it his pleasure to tell him, at least four or five times a-day, that he, the head lad, intended to give him a sound thrashing as a parting gift. What made this intimation so exceedingly unacceptable to Joe was the undoubted fact, which he well knew, that the head lad was most decidedly a man of his word.

'You sneaking, hang-dog-looking varmint!' cried the head lad, 'but for your rascality I should have gone to Epsom. I owe you one, Joe; and mind, I always pay my debts.'

The trainer returned from Epsom on Thursday, bringing Menander with him. He reached Newmarket in the afternoon, and his first thought, kind-hearted man, was of Joe Wotherspoon.

'Now,' said the trainer to his henchman, the head lad, 'we'll release Joe Wotherspoon.'

The head lad's eyes gleamed with satisfaction.

'Give him,' continued the trainer, 'the money that we found upon him, on these conditions—that he leaves Newmarket at once.'

'I'll accompany him,' said the considerate head lad, 'to the railway station, and see him safely off.'

And now the head lad went to Joe with five ten pound Bank of England notes, three sovereigns in gold, and four shillings and sixpence in silver in one hand, and a tough riding-whip in the other.

'Now, my dear young friend, Joe Wotherspoon,' said the head lad, 'I am to have the satisfaction of seeing you to the railway station, from which place you may take train to the devil, for aught I care. I shall be very particular to see you safely into the train, and by ——— if ever I catch you in Newmarket again, I'll be the death of you, Joe Wotherspoon. Here's your money.'

Joe clutched the notes, gold, and silver, and placed all in his favourite pocket. Then Joe found a firm close grip round his neckerchief and jacket-collar. Joe bellowed as loud as lad ever bellowed before; and then he received the severest horse whipping that any lad ever experienced in Newmarket before or

since that time. As Joe, abashed, walked in front of the head lad out of the yard he was the unwilling recipient, from a few of his old stable companions, of a parting gift in the shape of half-a-dozen stale nest-eggs, each one thrown with remarkable precision, and striking either in the face or on the neck; one in particular, a fearfully addled one, smashing full in his left ear.

VII.

SIR GERARD WINGFORD saw that he had played the Game of Life, and had lost the rubber. After the first feelings of irritation and annoyance were passed away, he could but acknowledge that he was beaten—fairly beaten. The cards were against him, and it was useless to strive against that which seemed inevitable. He had gambled with fate, and with his life in his own hand, and he had lost, and the consequences were on his own head. The result he knew, and he was determined to meet and look it boldly in the face. He was a fool (so his thoughts ran) to trust the execution of his plan to another; but dirty work was to be done, and he could only employ a dirty hand to do it. He was puzzled to imagine how the failure came about, because he had played a deep game; but it was clear that he had encountered a mind as clever as his own, and an unseen hand had struck the final blow in the dark. He had always striven hard for success, and often his efforts had been crowned with the fulfilment of his desires; still he could but confess that his successes had left no feelings of joy behind. As he sat thus musing on the past and the present, one face in particular haunted his memory.

He opened the lid of his *escritoir*, and unlocked one of its secret drawers, from which he took the likeness of a lady. The face was very beautiful, and seemed to wear a smile, half mischievous and half playful. He gazed on the lineaments of the face until his memory carried him years backwards, and he became lost in thought. After a time he arose, and sighed sadly as he replaced the picture in the drawer.

Sir Gerard's worst enemies never accounted him a weak or sentimental man. Those who knew him best deemed him a man of iron will and unbending determination. Pity, sorrow, or sympathy, were qualities entirely absent in his nature. Sympathy—an abstract commodity, which could always be gauged by placing a money value upon it, and as he never had

more money than he needed, all his sympathy was reserved for himself. But now he was forced to acknowledge that he was amenable to one human weakness, for he absolutely longed to gaze upon the features of the woman whose life he had wrecked years ago, and whose heart he had done his best to break.

* * * * *

Monday was settling-day, and the young Earl had intended to be present at Tattersall's, but the excitement of the last eight or nine days had completely unnerved him, and he was more languid and listless than usual. What little vitality he ever possessed seemed exhausted, so the Countess persuaded him to leave London, and pass a few days at their delightful country seat, Langton Abbey. His commissioner received full instructions to settle for him at Tattersall's.

Monday afternoon arrives, the Monday after the Derby, and hansom after hansom rolls up to the celebrated corner in Knightsbridge. Men jump out of the cabs with long, narrow slips of paper, or long thin red books in their hands, and rush into Tattersall's. Thousands and tens of thousands are paid away in notes and gold in the most unceremonious manner imaginable. 'Pay and receive,' is the order of the day, and men rush about as eagerly to do one as the other. Everything goes on satisfactorily for an hour or more, and then a voice calls out, 'Who settles for Sir Gerard Wingford?' to which there is no response. And then the faces of many men there assembled assumed a hard, blank look, and little knots of men get gathered together, with more or less consternation depicted on their faces.

* * * * *

This identical Monday evening was to have been the one bright, particular day in the life of Mr. Mike Borker. The supposed invaluable and faithful services of Mike were to be handsomely rewarded on this Monday evening. But somehow things had gone wrong, and Mike was an intensely disappointed man, and he was fast going wrong, too. 'I did my level best,' argued Mike, 'and it's not my fault it didn't come off. I'm not going to be shelved. I must have some brass!' And Mike went off, with a defiant air, for the purpose of making a friendly call on Sir Gerard Wingford.

Sir Gerard was alone in his sitting-room. He had passed the whole of the day in writing, and there were several docu-

ments lying on the table before him. He was quite calm, cool, and collected. He folded some Bank of England notes, amounting to a hundred pounds, in a sheet of letter-paper, which he carefully placed in a large envelope. He fastened the envelope with red wax, and stamped the wax with a seal bearing his own initials, and then addressed the envelope to a lady living in a London suburb. His watch and chain, and the rings from his fingers, he placed in a cardboard box, which he addressed to his brother, Captain Herbert Wingford, —th Regiment, Madras, India. More bank notes, amounting to fifty pounds, are placed in another envelope, and directed to his confidential servant, James Harper. Sir Gerard rang the bell, and Harper appeared.

‘Harper,’ said Sir Gerard, ‘I wish you to convey this letter, and deliver it into the hands of the lady to whom it is addressed yourself. When you return I shall not be here, but I will leave some written instructions, which I expect you to implicitly obey ; but that I need not say, because I am sure you will do so. I wish that letter taken at once,’ Harper.’

‘Yes, Sir Gerard,’ and the man went away, taking the letter with him.

‘Harper will be gone,’ so mused Sir Gerard, ‘about an hour and a half. ’Tis but a fleeting item in the ocean of time, yet in that space of ninety minutes how many events will occur, and how many things be done which can never again be undone, and how many words spoken which can never more be recalled ? How many human beings, even in this metropolis alone, will die in the next hour and a-half ? All this is idle to speculate upon. Death, sooner or later, will come to all, and that man’s a fool, and even worse than a fool, who fears death. I played for life and fortune, and am beaten. The penalty for those who play for such high stakes and lose, is—DEATH.’

He rose from his seat, and from a recess took a small, polished case, which he opened with a key, and the next moment he had a revolver in his hand. He carefully examined the chambers, and satisfied himself that all were loaded.

‘I could wish,’ he said, in a low but clear and distinct voice, ‘that matters had turned out differently. ’Tis useless now to repine ; that were cowardly, and my worst enemies never called me coward. There are two contingencies before me—DEATH or DISHONOUR—the first I can face, but not the second.’

He raised his hand until the muzzle of the pistol was level

with his head. Just at that moment a noise outside his door and on the landing fell upon his ear, and Mike Borker, drunk and reeling, unceremoniously staggered into the room. It was a bad moment for Mike Borker, for Sir Gerard hurled a bitter curse at Mike's head, and the next moment put a bullet clean through Mike's heart. Mike bounded forward, and then fell dead as a stone. The next moment another report echoed through the house, as the lifeless body of Sir Gerard rolled on to the floor, and the wall by his side was bespattered with his brains. Thus, with his own hand, Sir Gerard sent his own soul and that of Mike Borker's into eternity.

* * * * *

Rumour, with her thousand tongues, was busy endeavouring to explain the mystery surrounding the tragedy. As Ned Clavell and Frank Clifford gazed on the two dead and prostrate forms the truth became revealed to the observant mind of Clavell. In a few calm words he explained the facts to his friend.

'This, then,' said Frank, 'is a double event with a vengeance!'

The death of Sir Gerard Wingford was a severe shock to Earl Darville. The events of the last two weeks had given rise to more anxiety, excitement, and grief than the young Earl's system could bear. He never rallied, and within a month of the death of Sir Gerard the Earl of Darville died, a quiet and painless death.

The road was now clear for Frank Clifford, and in due time he married Mary, Countess of Darville, to whom the hidden secret of the Derby was fully explained.



I vow I'll go to the meet myself and report the whole proceedings!

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

OLD OXFORD DAYS.

By 'PECKWATER.'

'Imberbis juvenis tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibusque.'—HORACE.



YES! in these days, as in the Augustan age, horse and hound were the delights of ingenuous youth. '*Custodes quis custodiet ipsos?*' many an anxious parent might have justly exclaimed, on discovering that his hopeful had been in the habit of hunting twice a-week with the Heythrop or Bicester hounds without let or hindrance from the College authorities. In fact, had he thought fit to remonstrate, he would have found that some of the dons rather prided themselves on the number of pinks their college turned out; aye, and they were right in not discouraging those who could afford it, indulging in a sport far better for them than other questionable pursuits which men who neither read nor hunted frequently engaged in.

It is true that men whose means were wholly inadequate would sometimes ape the habits and mode of life of those whose position justified their expenditure. This naturally entailed hardships on all concerned, which often fell heaviest on the unfortunate tradesman or stablekeeper who had supplied the ambitious youth with the means of enjoyment, the formidable bills for which the stern parent would repudiate as not representing articles necessary for a young man's academical career.

Imagine some matter-of-fact 'pater' of the following type on a visit to his son. They walk down the 'High' towards Magdalen Bridge on an afternoon in Lent term. Men in dog-carts and on horseback pass them, some in semi-hunting costume, breeches, boots, and black velvet cap. Pater stares at them, too astonished for a time to ask what it all means. He is then told

that the Christ Church drag have a fixture at Waterperry that afternoon, and that the men who have passed by are going to ride therein or to look on. At length he finds words to express his feelings.

‘And do you mean to say the authorities of this University allow such proceedings? They surely cannot be aware of what goes on!’

Then some acquaintance of his son hails him from the back of a dog-cart. ‘What, not going to ride to-day, Archy?’ and the old gentleman’s indignation is beyond control. He at length declares,—

‘I vow I’ll go to the meet myself and report the whole proceedings. Where can we get a carriage?’ They are close to the ‘Angel.’

‘Oh, here!’ says the hopeful, highly delighted at the prospect of seeing the drag, after the disappointment he had been groaning under.

A carriage and pair is ordered at once, and as they are moving away Archy sees his friend Lovell walking on a-head.

‘You know Frank Lovell, father; I wish you’d give him a ride:’ to which the pater grimly assents, and the three proceed on their way. They pass several horsemen riding quietly on.

‘Why, there’s Archy Thornton and his governor going to see the drag! What an old brick he must be!’ remarks one of the horsemen.

He little knew what was passing through that same governor’s mind, or he would have changed his opinion as to his paternal and social qualities. The two young men tried a cheerful tone, but the freezing demeanour of the old ‘un shut them up completely.

‘I thought you were going to ride to-day, Thornton. I heard you were backed against——’ a vicious kick on the shin brought the indiscreet babbler to a sense of the position, and he pulled up abruptly.

‘Eh! what’s that?—what’s that?’ pater inquired, and just at the moment the driver pulled up at a turn of the road which landed them on a small common on which the meet was to take place.

The *pack*—some six couple of draft foxhounds—with ‘Ani-seed,’ were in waiting. Soon the field began to assemble.

‘Oh, here come Lords Ribbesdale and Dungarvan, the masters of the drag,’ says the hopeful.

‘Eh, what? Lord—who did you say?’

The pater was an old Indian civilian, and dearly loved a Lord. He had hitherto regarded the spectacle with undisguised contempt, but when he heard the Marquis of B—— and several Baronets’ names mentioned, the old toady looked round with a glance of patronising approval. And when Lord Dungarvan rode up to the carriage with ‘Are you not going to ride to-day, Thornton?’ and Archy explained that he had brought his father to see the sport instead, and his Lordship raised his cap to Mr. Thornton, and hoped he would have a good view of the chase, the old gentleman was quite won over by this piece of courtesy, and expressed the great interest he felt in the whole affair.

‘Drive on as quickly as you can to the bridge; you will see us cross the brook—at least those who escape a ducking—and then straight on for a mile, where we cross the lane for the finish.’

These were his Lordship’s instructions, which the driver, who knew the country, proceeded to follow. They had counted some five-and-twenty men mounted and in drag-riding costume, and then made the best of their way among a throng of dog-carts and horsemen to the bridge as directed.

The brook! Water is the great attraction in all cross-country contests—for the spectators at all events. And this same ‘Water-perry’ has been talked of all the world over. About fifteen feet wide, deep, and with not very sound banks, it takes some doing to get over safely, especially for the despised Oxford hack. Never mind, you much-derided quadruped! You may be a rum ‘un to look at; let us see now how you can go.

Here they come! all pretty well together at the fence before the water, two or three empty saddles showing that casualties had already commenced. Then they begin to tail a bit, and some take a decided pull, while the best men single themselves out, each taking a line of his own.

Burton, Allgood, Peel, Thursby, Ribblesdale, Dungarvan, take the brook in style; then comes Drury Wake, bucketing at it with whip and spur. His horse can’t get his stride in to take off, and is putting the brake on, trying ‘to go in the breeching instead of the collar,’ as old Ben Land used to say. Then a decided stop and a swerve, and the plucky little man is shot head first into the muddy stream. Next comes a ruck, some half funking and others on refusers; now a series of bumps and collisions, and some half-dozen are struggling in the brook, where we leave them and hurry on for the next point.

The lane is another favourite spot for connoisseurs in steeple-chase sensations.

'I shall stay here, Bill; some swell is sure to break his neck into this 'ere road,' we heard a navvy say to his pal when walking over a well-known course years ago.

Consoling, wasn't it? Yes, and this lane at which we have now arrived is about as ugly a bit as could be picked out. A thick blackthorn fence with boggy ditch into it, and an equally rough hairy-looking obstacle on the other side. The road is wide, with broad strips of sward on each side; which is an advantage, as the fence out requires one to put all steam on.

But there's the gate, new and stiff, and the take-off is none too good! No one will make for that, surely! No more time, however, is allowed for speculations, for they are clattering down the slope towards us; the hounds cross the lane, and we count some ten horsemen all pretty well together. They are riding in earnest. Yes, that's the horn which is blown at the finish, and some two fields away you can see the tall poles with flags for them to finish between.

'Look at this madman coming straight at the gate! Get off it, you bumpkins!' shouts the governor in wild excitement. 'Drive on, will you? he'll break his neck for certain.'

Yes, down the bank he is coming; he notes the rough impenetrable-looking fence, then the gate catches his keen eye.

'Timber for me,' he says to himself, 'rather than that.' His horse is extended, aye, he is riding him hard, for he means to win, and here is just the opportunity of a dash for victory. The rest go for the fence, some get through with a blunder, others come head and knees into the boggy ditch; all eyes are then centred on the timber.

'What a cropper he'll have!' more than one are ready to exclaim; but no, some three lengths off he takes a pull, balances his horse with his hind legs well under him, a ram with both spurs, and a vigorous lift with both hands, and the gallant pair land safely on the sward without peck or stumble.

A loud cheer greets the plucky performance. Without breaking his stride he charges the fence out of the lane, gains some half-dozen lengths on those who were before leading him, and eventually wins in a canter.

'Splendidly done!' cried the governor, ecstatically. 'Never saw anything to beat it in India, except once, when I and Tom Hawtreys charged a nullah.'



A wild cheer greets the plucky performance

The rest of this well-known adventure was cut short by a throng of men surrounding the carriage, which gave our youngster the chance of inviting a select lot to his rooms to wine that evening, whither he and the governor adjourned after quietly dining at the 'Mitre.'

We will not narrate the full evening's events further than to remark that the old boy's story of the nullah was listened to with marked attention *twice*, but when, later on, he was about to commence it a third time, some profane youngster started a song with a rollicking chorus, and personal anecdotes were at an end.

The only really anxious moment occurred when the pater received an answer to the question he asked his neighbour, namely, the cost to each of the afternoon's amusement; and it evidently made a lasting impression upon him, for before the end of the term his solicitor came up, collected Archy's debts, paid them, and before the long vacation commenced the youth was on his way to Calcutta, to take a stool in the office of Arbuthnot and Co., secured him through the interest of his pater with that eminent firm.

About this time the riding men of Christ Church got into trouble with the dons, owing to the nuisance created by their horses and dog-carts assembling outside Canterbury gate. The very Reverend the Dean summoned them to wait on him *en masse* to receive judgment. From forty to fifty answered to the call, and at the appointed time crowded round the Deanery door. The bell had been rung more than once without response, and signs of impatience were manifested in various forms. The fact was the dining-room was being put in order for the occasion, and his Reverence the Dean was arranging for the imposing ordeal. The dining-room door opened immediately on the left of the entrance hall.

When all was ready within, the doors were suddenly thrown open, and the high dignitary was seen standing in front of the fireplace prepared to administer grave rebuke to the offenders. Of course it was expected that the culprits would enter in a submissive and penitent fashion, instead of which a sustained rush from the rear sent the foremost ranks headlong into the room, and so far across it that the Dean was in imminent danger of being knocked backwards on to his own fire.

The effect was ludicrous to a degree. In vain did the foremost try to keep back; it was like the rush into the pit of a theatre when the doors are opened on a first night.

'Gently ! gently ! I beg of you !' the old Don feebly uttered in remonstrance ; and when order had been partially restored he contented himself with forbidding the unseemly parade in front of his sacred precincts, which the offenders promised to abolish, and departed rejoicing.

Serious accidents with the drag were not frequent ; one of the worst happened to Johnny Broome, then champion of the middle weights in the P. R. He was a bruiser across country as well as in the ring, and had finished fourth in the Liverpool Grand National on his own horse, 'Eagle,' the year before. Being in Oxford he determined to show the 'boys' the way. Strangers occasionally were allowed to ride, and Broome, having received the necessary permission, procured one of the best mounts the place afforded, and presented himself at the meet, loudly proclaiming the certainty of his own success. Seeing the large field of horsemen assembled, he at once pulled out his book and pencil and proceeded to 'lay against the field ;' this operation, to his great disappointment, was quickly put a stop to by the masters, and then the hounds were laid on, and the chase began.

Broome went off with a strong lead, which for about half the distance he managed to keep ; he rode as if it was all over but shouting, and his mare, 'Old Alice Grey,' carried him to perfection ; there were several dangerous customers, however, waiting upon him, and there was one experience which Johnny was unacquainted with, and that was the difficulty of negotiating an Oxfordshire double with safety. Had he left the matter to his clever mare she would have managed it in her well-known artistic style ; but no ! he rushed her at the fence to take it in a fly. The consequence may be imagined ; the second ditch, of course, provided an opening for the adventurous pugilist which he and his mare filled forthwith, and from which he was with difficulty extricated, with a broken collar-bone and such a general smash-up as he had never in his life before experienced ; at least so he declared as we passed him on the road home with his arm in a sling and his smart hat and raiment plastered with mud.

Some weeks afterwards (fortunately at the end of term) what at first appeared to be a lamentable fatality occurred, which those who were present are not likely to forget. For some reason or other a fresh fixture with a new line of country had been decided on, the Waterperry brook had to be crossed lower

down than the usual point, and near to a mill. Some bungling in running the drag must have occurred, as hounds and all the field got wide of the line ; the result was, we came to the brook where it was quite unjumpable and had to go in and out as best we could. This, of course, led to all sorts of laughable incidents. One man was clever enough to catch sight of a narrow foot-bridge, without parapets or any protection to its sides ; he was carefully picking his way across when a loose horse came galloping after him and knocked him horse and all into the stream, out of which he struggled, *minus* hat and whip, and continued the chase to meet with a still worse adventure. Towards the finish we got into some small enclosures and began racing in earnest. We could see the flags and hear the horn ; out of one of these fields the mishap already alluded to took place. The fence was an ordinary hedge with ditch in front. Four men raced at it abreast and disappeared from view ; the next man took the fence lower down, and on landing was horrified to see the leading men and horses all stretched out apparently lifeless. They had landed in a sand-pit. One horse's neck was broken, one rider was under his horse and for a painfully lengthened period showed no signs of life, while the others were stunned and for some minutes knocked out of time altogether. As one of the men continued in great danger for a long time, the catastrophe could not be hushed up, and a peremptory order was issued by the authorities abolishing the Drag hunt. This order was, of course, superfluous, as with one of the most popular members lying between life and death from this accident, the rest would be in no way disposed to continue their amusement.

Racing over a country that has not been selected or looked over at all is, of course, risky to a degree, but the man who runs the trail is supposed to select a line free from all neck-breaking obstacles, and in this case some gross mistake must have been made.

Some of our readers may remember the Eynsham Drag. Here was a line of country stiff enough to try the best of horses and men. Starting in the meadows by the river, thick bullfinches and wide ditches were the obstacles that met the ardent horseman ; luckily the fields are large and fences comparatively few, for none but the boldest and biggest jumpers could manage them.

As we look back and recall what these Oxford hacks and

hunters were called upon to do, and compare them with horses we had afterwards, our wonder increases that such animals could have been got together to stand the wear and tear to which they were constantly exposed. The cover hack would often have to gallop fifteen miles to the best meets of the Heythrop, the hunter having been sent on over-night, and the distance would be done in less than an hour and a half. But the best illustration of what the galloping hack could do is shown in the feat performed by Drury Wake, then of Christ Church. He backed himself to ride from Magdalen Bridge to Cumberland Gate, Hyde Park (and back), one hundred and four miles, under six hours, and did the distance easily within *five hours*.

He had the ordinary Oxford hacks posted along the road, and was carried at this great speed without the slightest mistake.

SHANKS'S PONY.

A CHRISTMAS ABSURDITY.

By CUTHBERT BEDE, Author of *Verdant Green*.

IT was close upon Christmas, though the weather was not what is popularly known as Christmassy, for it was warm and muggy. I had had a long trudge through the December sludge and slush over the heavy plough and greasy grass-land, varied but with a slight amount of the 'ammer, ammer, ammer on the arduous road.' I could have truthfully said with Puck's Fairy, that I had been

'Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,—

and I bore the visible traces of my cross-country journey in the shape of mud, that plastered me from top to toe. I surpassed Sydney Smith's dirty-fisted, card-playing Parson, who 'kept his glebe on his own hands,' for I had the traces of some of my own fields on my face.

I had walked, trudged, and run a considerable distance, having, on my return from a depressing visit to my Home Farm, accidentally, and quite unexpectedly, met with the famous Blankshire Hounds in full cry. They had crossed their own

borders, having run their gallant fox many miles, until he had led them into our country—the Loamshire. The sight beguiled me to turn from my destined homeward course, and I found myself irresistibly attracted to go on from one field to another, and from one coign of vantage to another, until, having been rewarded with a very good view of the finish, I had to turn my steps and walk home by a far longer route than I had originally contemplated.

As I got near to my house I met my good friend and neighbour the Doctor—a mighty Nimrod—who had always a patient who lived near to every meet, and required a visit on the very morning of the meet. He thus enjoyed the ride to hounds, and escaped the calumny of neglecting his professional duties.

‘Why, where have you been, Squire,’ he cheerily said, ‘to pick up so much dirt? Are you going in for the mud-bath cure?’

‘If I said No,’ I replied, ‘the evidence would be against me. But the fact is, I have had an unexpected run with the Blankshire.’

‘On what?’ asked the Doctor.

‘On Shanks’s pony,’ I replied; ‘my own legs; and very well they have carried me, for I was in at the death.’

When I went to bed on that night I slept soundly for some hours, and then I dreamed, and, presumably, the scenes that I had recently witnessed made a framework for the mental picture that I conjured up. I imagined myself, attired in the most correct costume for the chase, mounted on the back of Paddy, my favourite Irish 200-guinea hunter. I was heading the field; the pace was fast, and I was urging on my wild career, though I was not tied on like Mazeppa: nor was there any need for it, as I had a good grip with my knees, and the biggest fences seemed like flying; but in racing him at a wide brook the bank suddenly gave way, and Paddy and I had a cold bath.

Then there was a sudden shifting in my dream. Paddy and the brook were nowhere, and I was paying a visit to my well-appointed stables. But what a change had come over them! they showed me nothing but empty stalls—dress circle and loose boxes included. Therefore, it would be folly in me to order the invisible groom to bring forth my steed. Perhaps he had eaten his head off? Thereby would hang a tail. Could this be a nightmare? But I don’t need a night mare; what I want is a day mare. Anyway, owing to circumstances over which I have

no control, it is plain to me that I must do without my day mare, and that I have no mount. Having no mount, I take this ill.

But I am not to be balked of my favourite sport, and I resolve to attend the meet on Shanks's pony. What are his merits and characteristics? This particular pony I find to be in excellent condition—rather leggy, perhaps, but well shod, and capable of bearing its owner across country. It can also kick, if needful. I determine to put him to immediate use; and as I am unable to appear in pink and tops on the outside of Paddy, I resolve to disguise myself, and to enjoy my sport without being recognised by my friends. I do so, and set out to the meet. What meet? A Lawn meet? Of course not! A lawn meet is reserved for the Bishops in Convocation.

On my way there I soon discover that my disguise is perfectly successful, for I open a troublesome field-gate—one of my own gates, too—to my neighbour the Doctor. He does not know me; but takes the Squire for a labourer, and tips me a sixpence. This supplies me with a grand idea. I will try to get more tips; they will pay my expenses, and I shall have the pleasure of earning an honest penny. The occasion at once arises. I see a man in difficulties; he has been endeavouring to negotiate a fence, and the negotiation has landed him in the ditch on the opposite side from his horse. I cleverly leap the gap on Shanks's pony, and catch the riderless steed. 'I'll 'old him while yer 'onner mounts!' He does so, and gives me a tip. I am successful! tip, tip, tip, hurrah!

The hounds have found. The hounds throw off; so do some horses. I make excellent running on Shanks's pony, and my knowledge of the country enables me to take short cuts. (Cuts—cuts at the meet! Work out the idea for a comic paper when I awake.) Shanks's pony is most reliable, and carries me safely over five-bars and stiles, and even over that abomination the invisible wire, over which a horse pitches headlong, pitching his rider over his head; and then, when I have rushed to his rescue, he pitches me a shilling. Perhaps from these pitches I imagine it must be the famous Pitch-ley country, twice so called by Mr. Bright on a memorable occasion, amid the roars of the House, when he designated the famous pack as 'curs,' and sneered at the thousands who regarded hunting as 'an essential of life.' Mr. Bright, as a follower of Izaak Walton, could realise, with intense enjoyment, the

character of 'Piscator,' but had no sympathy for his friend 'Venator.' (He preferred to change the V to S, and make 'Venator' into 'Senator.' Try to work this out when I am awake.)

Shanks's pony carries me well in advance, and I vault a locked five-barred, well-spiked gate, in the face of a lane full of infuriated horsemen. They are 'left lamenting,' like the father in 'Lord Ullin's Daughter,' and have to hark back and try another route, while I am leisurely trotting on in front. Shanks's pony, too, does not prevent me from climbing a tree to get a bird's-eye view, and to shape my course accordingly, for I had lost sight of the hounds, and I can now see where they are, on the far side of a high stone wall—a serious obstacle to the mounted field. But I easily get to the other side of this park wall, and am off and away on Shanks's pony before the horsemen can gallop round to an entrance-gate. I am also enabled, with ease, to cross a narrow foot-bridge, with an awkward stile at the further end, and below it a deep brook with rotten banks.

Finally, I am in at the death, having headed most of the field. I evidently excite the interest of the few who have succeeded in living to the end. Shanks's pony has shown his breed and stamina. I am in disguise, and cannot be recognised. There are murmurs, 'Who is he? Who can he be?' Ha, ha! I lift my labourer's hat and false whiskers, and, striking a melodramatic attitude, cry, 'I am Hawkshaw the Detective!'

Tableau! curtain!—the bed curtain—which is drawn by Jones (the only Jones). Think I must have heard that name before—probably in a screaming farce. (Will work this out when I am awake.)

I am awake; and rouse myself from absurdity to reality. 'It's eight o'clock, sir,' says Jones, my man. 'Your bath is ready; and Stragglers' Gorse is eight miles off.'

Stragglers' Gorse is where the Loamshire Hounds meet this morning, and I have to be there at eleven. But it will be on Paddy, and not on Shanks's pony.

COACHING AND COCK-FIGHTING.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

YOU are quite right, Mister Rockwood ; Sam Scroggins was the most reckless, onredgardless guard as ever I drove afore. He was rarely out of a scrape, was Sam ; and it's my humble impression, looking back on old times, that he never was fairly happy unless he was in one. Never ! Lor bless you, Sir ! I could tell you loads of stories about poor old Sam if I was only to start ; but peace to his bones ! and they would need to have peace, as there wasn't one of 'em as wasn't broke—and his thigh-bone thrice, it was, and been out o' j'int too, it had, if I recollects rightly. Some folks are never well unless they're up to the splinter-bars in devilment. Wi' Joe Monkcastle it was wimmen ; Peter Finch, that came after him, it was bettin'. He won a bet, did Pete, in his last moment o' life, for he had on the price of a new hat that his neck would be snapped afore old Hutchins would run us off the road. We was running Opposition then. And Jim Walker paid his losings in a funeral wreath like a man, three days after the big Buckley Hill spill. But with Sam Scroggins it was everything, no matter what. But they'd have settled him that time about the cocks, they would. Luck stood him, however. It always did stand Sam when Sam stood himself, and deserted him the moment the coach lost its balance, and paid him out, as I was sayin', in the bones. Of course you heerd of the story of Sam and the cocks ? Everybody has heerd o' that by this time, I dare say.'

Confessing to Joe Walton (one of the last of the old school of mail-coach drivers) that I had never heard the romance he alluded to—though many a good story of his guard, Sam Scroggins, I had listened to—he motioned me to draw my chair closer to the fire of the little bar-parlour in the well-known old 'Grey Goat' Inn at Carlisle, and signalled the barmaid to refill our empty glasses. It was in the fag-end of the coursing season, and the east winds which swept over the leas at Longtown were cold enough to freeze the dogs to the slips—ay, even the grog to the lips.

* * * * *

'Never heard about Sam and the cocks ! Well, it's not from

my not having been a-tellin' of it. I've been a tellin' of it now for nigh fifty years, and it's a story as stands telling yet. That's the worst of all these railways, there ain't a single bit o' fun allowed; and if a guard did a thing such as I'm going to tell you he would have been put in prison. No more heart is there in railway folks now-a-days than there is in the boiler-bustin' old engine itself. But Sam—I begs your pardon, Sam and I worked the best London stage between Penrith and this, and right well we did it too. We had the best o' cattle, and Sir James Graham, of Netherby, he took a personal interest in the coach. You don't get swells now-a-days to do that in the railway-train. However, Sir James was a good friend to the coach, a good friend to me, and a particular good friend to Sam. I says particular, for he was continually getting Sam out o' scrapes, almost nigh, though not so often maybe, as Samuel was getting into them.

'Well, we were coming up overnight once, with two as merry gents as were passengers as ever I see, bound for the grouse-shooting. It was just getting on to the Twelfth of August, and they were for the moors. Ah, these were the times! There were gentlemen on the road, and your packman chaps, with their needles and pins stuck to their own carts and horses. We always had swells; none o' the men they have now, with fifty samples o' ladies' bonnets, all in handboxes, to take care of. Oh! don't think I don't know; I've been down to Carlisle Station and seen 'em! "What would you ha' done with all these in coaching times?" says Harry Grimsby the porter's son. "Chucked them into a ditch," says I, "and left 'em there!" "You'd get thirty days' driving on the coach without wheels," says he, "if you'd ha' tried it now-a-days!"

'But where on earth am I a-gettin' to? Oh, I see. We'd got two swells as was goin' north to the grouse-shooting, and it was getting on for mornin'—as nice a morning as ever you see, the dew wetting the yellow corn and the heather blooming bonnie up on the fells, and a kind of new-oiled feeling about everything, the old coach being real downright pleased with herself. You laugh at that, but, believe it or not, coaches had speerits just like you or me, and their sulky moods and tempery styles like the hosses that drew them. Well, we were rattling down past old Joe Hinshaw's farm, him as kept the greyhounds, the regular Waterloo-ers, when one of his old dunghill cocks set up its morning crowin'. All at once, just at my side, in a green bag that was hanging from the rail, there comes a deevil of a

crow, which very nearly frightened me off the box. The hosses they started off, the gents laughing like mad, and the cock inside the bag crowing all the time; and just when I had pulled 'em back almost on their quarters, I'm hanged if another cock, that also was hanging in a bag on the near side, didn't start crowin' too! It was more than I could well stand. So, suspecting something, I says, "Look here, Samuel Scroggins, you may have as many games on the road as you like; but when you comes to try and play it upon me it won't work."

"Who's a-playing a game on you, Joe?" he shouts.

"You are, you son of a Cockermouth basket-wife!" I says, like to burst, for my near leader was in a fearful nervius condition.

"Why," he says, "haven't we to carry the goods as we're ordered to, and ain't these the two game-cocks for the little bit of a private electioneering match that's to be fought over at G——? Say the word, and I'll twist the necks of both of 'em, but don't blame me."

"Well, there was no way out of it but take 'em, as I saw, though we werrent altogether bound to carry live stock. Ducks and drakes was one thing in those days and fighting-cocks was another. Lor bless you! many a rare good main I've witnessed. The gents always filled in their time afore racing with a little cocking, and rare good fun it was.

"Will I wring their necks for 'em?" asked Sam, as they again started crowin' against each other. "You know we're not bound to carry anything that will endanger the lives o' the passengers, or, which is of more importance to some folks, delay His Majesty's mail."

"You leave 'em alone," I cried, "that's all," as I heard him explain to the gents, as wanted to have a look at 'em, that there was one, a rare good Knowsley-bred 'un, for Harry Flitch o' the "Cross Buttock" Inn, the Tory head-quarters; and the other, against which it was to be matched, was for Simon Temple o' the "Harp," the Whig house; "and," he added, "the house o' all the sneaking Post-office Government Inspectors on the road. I should like to wring its neck, if I wrung the neck of any one."

"It would be a real pity to waste 'em like that," says the first gent.

"I wouldn't mind backin' the Conservative cock against the Whig one. I know a good cock by its crow!" says he.

"You do?" says Sam. "Well, hang me but I'd like



'The Knowsley cock literally cut the other to pieces.'

to see the shine taken out of this bird o' Simon Temple's; and besides, I ain't seen a good cock-fight for many a day, though when I was a boy there wasn't a lad as could set birds against me anywhere near Carlisle!"

'Now, Mr. Rockwood, all this I overheard as we were rattling down-hill with the drag on, and the stones rattling right and left, and I pretty well saw what the upshot would be if these gents were to have their way. Sam was such a devil, that the more you tried to keep his head down the road the more he wanted to whip round or look over the hedge. So I just gave him a right good stare and said, "Mister Scroggins, you let these gamecocks alone till I complains about them, and you'll do very well, you will."

"All right, Mr. Walton, old man!" says he, with his heckles fairly rising. He always thought you was insulting him by "mistering" him. "I will if they holds their tongues; but you mind your hosses. If they crows again, and any passenger lodges a complaint against 'em, you leave 'em to me!"

'I drove the next ten miles without saying a word, and the cocks were silent; but another old rooster started 'em both when we got to the "Halfway House."

'We kind o' made it up over a wee drap o' brandy, but I was courtin' the widow who kept the bar then, and so I never looked after him. However, I could see that there was a bit o' devilment in him, just as you catch it in a horse's eye when he is about to kick.

"You better go in and see, Mr. Walton," said the girl; "there's something on wi' Mister Scroggins, your guard, and the gentlemen passengers."

'Well, into the back-parlour I walks, and the first thing I sees is Sam on his knees on the floor, setting a cock against one held by the youngest of the gentlemen.

"You have a bet, old man!" to me he says, with his usual impudence; "have a rum-and-water on wi' me!" But I couldn't see it. "Well," he says, "don't spoil the game, and it'll be best for both of us."

'The bird with the red heckles and very red feathers was then set down by Sam, and the fight commenced. It didn't last long, I tell you, for the Knowsley-bred cock literally cut the other almost to pieces with the spur. Sam had got hold of spurs at the inn. The other bird did not face up, mind. I did not say which bird it was. And after a little drop o' rum-and-

water with one o' the gents I made my way back to the coach, not feeling very well in my mind that things would come all right.

'Said Sam, "I wish, Joe Walton, we could serve some of the Government Inspectors out the same!" was his remark; on which I said that the Government Inspectors would settle him for that little game, anyway.

'Well, we delivered these cocks at G—— all right, and drove in very quick, I can tell you; but you wouldn't be surprised to hear that when Simon Temple went to pick out his bird out of the bag he found nothing but a dead mass of blood and feathers, though Harry Flitch's had just a scratch or two about the comb. That Sam Scroggins had to do with it there could be no doubt; so we were both had up on the carpet, and there the Inspectors kept a shoving in questions. As to me, I said I was driving the coach, and had to keep my eye on my hosses. Sam, of course, wore the very look of injured innocence. All he knew was, that two cocks started crowin' in green bags, and that the one belonging to Harry Flitch crowed the longest. Coach did rub a little against the trees once or twice, and that might have damaged the other, but really he didn't know. Still, a report did go up to the Postmaster-General about the irregularity, as it was called. Sam's luck stood him, however. The Whigs were worsted at the hustings, and the Postmaster-General went out of office, and we was a True Blue Tory coach. Nothing more ever came of it; but, passing "The Harp," Sam shouts to old Simon Temple at the door,—

'Hey there, Simon, old man! I'll back that cock o' Harry Flitch's against a dozen o' your sort. Don't you make any match against him; he's got a bit o' the eagle in him, old man, and can handle his heels like a thoroughbred!" And then, with his mouth to his key bugle, which he carried as well as the horn, he started the old cocker's tune,—

"With hackles raised and glittering eyes,
And silver spurs a-shining bright."

'Oh, he was a rum 'um, was Sam!'

THE SILVER HOOK.

By 'KINGFISHER.'

SEPTEMBER'S sheaves are rare to view,
 The plains at morn are wet with dew,
 The golden crops no longer wave,
 Nor poppies flaunt their banners brave.
 Her fairy webs the spider weaves
 On turf and hedgrow, blades and leaves,
 The speckled trout in wavelets gleam,
 The fly falls light on autumn stream.
 'Tis then we quit the busy mart
 To ease the weary brain and heart,
 Through fields sequestered free to roam,
 Where mill-wheels dash and mill-tails foam.
 At 'Old-Time' inn we hear the tale,
 Much older than their nut-brown ale,
 With guerdon bright secure the grace
 Of Caster, genius of the place,
 Who lightly scans our treasures o'er,
 Then says, 'He'd seen them all before;
 They're worthless one and all—that's flat!'—
 Then doffs his greasy low-crowned hat,
 At foaming tankard takes a pull,
 And deigns a few choice flies to cull,
 That look so mean you'd never dream
 They'd tempt the trout in any stream;
 Yet he declares without those flies
 We'll scarce get Denton fish to rise.
 His tales of monsters—one five-pounder—
 Don't tend to make us sleep the sounder;
 Yet we at morn a freshness feel
 And eager grasp the rod and creel,
 For Caster send, and, breakfast past,
 With trembling hands we try the cast.
 The landlord gives his parting wish
 For frequent rise and gamesome fish.
 By pathway short we reach the bank
 Where bushes tall and sedges rank,
 With alders stunt and lines of willow,
 By turns o'erhang the tiny billow.
 'Tis little chance the rod will stand
 That's only wielded 'overhand;'

Yet now and then some gaps appear
At which the windward bank is clear.
The first few hours we land a score
That average half a pound or more,
At dinner-time we all agreed
‘The heavy fish weren’t on the feed;’
Yet, ere we’d finished our repast,
The welcome ‘sug’ was heard at last.
‘Now,’ Caster says, ‘your nerves are cool,
The fish on feed: we’ll seek that pool,
The last before we reach the bounds,
Where lies the trout we judge five pounds.’
With cautious step the spot we near,
At distance pause in anxious fear,
Renew the cast, draw out more line,
With care get out the gut so fine,
And when we think we’ve gauged the length,
The venture make with well-judged strength.
The ‘leader’ tips a leaflet bright,
Falls on the stream like cobweb light,
‘Suck!’ See the swirl the Titan makes,
As, frantic down his way he takes
To seek his long-accustomed lair,
Shut in by crossing thorn-roots bare.
With gentle force his course to stay
The pliant rod is brought in play,
And, spite of frantic leap and rush,
We steer him clear of reed and bush,
Till, worn his strength, his ample side
Shows frequent through the crystal tide;
Then butt and net to end the scene,
The streamlet’s lord lay on the green.

To weigh the fish is now our duty—
Five pounds six ounces! What a beauty!
We’ll wet him well; another day
May we a fish as gamesome play.
The sun declining towards the west,
Content in mind we seek our rest.
With glee the spoil the landlord eyes,
‘Depend,’ says he, ‘whoever tries
To catch big fish in Denton brook
Must Caster catch with *Silver Hook*.’

'HOW HE WON HER.'

By FINCH MASON.

CHAPTER I.



AND that is your final decision, is it, Sir ?'

'Yes, Master Gerald, that's my "ultipomatum," as dear old Middlewick says in the play. I've quite made up my mind—settled it, indeed, long ago—that whoever wishes to marry my daughter must arrange beforehand to have fifteen thousand—and not a halfpenny less, mind !—ready to settle on her, before I give my consent to the match. And to show that the money's not all to be one side, I should, on my part, be quite prepared to double it, to say nothing of a bit more when the day comes for me to turn up my toes. You see, it's just this way, my boy. I look at things from a thoroughly worldly point of view. In short, I don't believe in bread-and-cheese and kisses, or love in a cottage, or any of that sort of nonsense. Blanche and her sisters have all their lives been used to live in luxury ; that is to say, they have had at their command everything a girl can possibly wish for—horses to ride, carriages to drive in, pretty frocks to wear—in short, have been denied nothing, for I like to see young things enjoy themselves, both boys and girls. Now, when my lasses marry, I want them to go on enjoying themselves, not to be obliged to do without this or go without that, simply because "We can't afford it." What ! I could not bear to think of such a thing. Now, you're a very good fellow, Gerald ; you're capital company over a cigar for such a young man, and, altogether, I like you very much (I only wish I liked your prospects half as well) ; but, you must allow, you've got no money, or next to none. You've been living on your capital, you extravagant dog you, ever since your father died. I heard of your doings at Newmarket last year, and your winning the Hunt Cup at the Tinkleton Meeting in the spring. People *will* talk, don't you know—eh ? You've got five thousand left, have you ? Well, you're lucky to have that ; for a man—especially a young one—don't go racing for nothing, as I know to my cost. So now you know all about it. Come here the same as usual,

whenever you like; only, mind, I trust to your honour as regards Blanche. Don't go and upset her to no purpose, there's a good boy, it will only make her miserable; and I can't stand that, don't you know. And now, good-bye. I'm glad you've taken all I had to say in such good part. Look us up when you come back to town, and if by some extraordinary piece of luck you should have the fifteen thousand I mentioned just now along with you,' wound up Mr. Townley, with a chuckle—'why, so much the better, for I shall then be in a position to welcome you as my future son-in law, and say, "Go in and win"—eh?'

When Gerald Massey left Mr. Townley's town house that February afternoon, after his conversation with that gentleman with reference to his fair daughter Blanche, there is no disguising the fact that that young gentleman's usually bright-looking face looked, vulgarly speaking, as long as a ladder. He was, in short, very much disappointed with the result of his interview. Knowing that Mr. Townley was a man of ample means, and being well aware of the fact that he himself was a special favourite of the old gentleman's, he had fondly hoped that any deficiency there might be on his own side as regards money matters would have been made up by an extra amount of liberality on the other; he had expected, in short, that the good old gentleman would have presented him with his daughter and his blessing on the spot, settled a handsome dowry on the bride to be, there and then, the wedding would have been fixed that day six weeks, and all, in short, have gone as merrily as the proverbial marriage bells. On the whole, therefore, it was a decided sell the way things had turned out. His system had received a distinct shock.

'Fifteen thousand pounds!' exclaimed he, as he lit a cigar—a big one. 'How the devil am I to get hold of fifteen thousand pounds, I should like to know? Might just as well have said a hundred thousand while he was about it, the confounded old screw! Fifteen thousand pounds!—eh? Well, I only wish you may get it, that's all.'

And having by this time reached Jermyn Street, where he 'hung out,' as he called it, when in town, he sadly let himself in with his latch-key, and proceeded to pack up his traps preparatory to taking himself off into the country, where he proposed amusing himself for the rest of the winter with the pleasures of the chase.

Gerald Massey's recognised head-quarters when he was at

home was at Woodbine Lodge, a charming little house in Buttercupshire, where dwelt a maiden aunt of his—a sister of his late mother's—and Gerald's two unmarried sisters. Here Martin Gerald kept his two hunters, did a good deal of shooting with the neighbours, and did his duty to his aunt and her two nieces by escorting them to the balls and different entertainments that came off in the neighbourhood. To this pleasant establishment, where, needless to say, he was thoroughly spoilt by all its inmates, our young friend now repaired, for the double purpose of doing some hunting and, if possible, healing that severe wound he had received just under the left wing at the hands of the fair Blanche Townley in the course of his fortnight's sojourn in town during the late frost.

Long did he tarry with his aunt's very excellent claret that evening after the ladies had gone; vilely did he play whist afterwards in the drawing-room—he revoked three times, causing his aunt, who happened to be his partner, to think that her fond nephew had partaken too freely of the flowing bowl. Many were the cigars (and he was going to hunt on the morrow, too) that were consumed by him late into the night. But it was no go. That confounded fifteen thousand pounds stuck in his throat do what he would, and the more he smoked and thought, and thought and smoked, the less he saw his way at all clearly.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Gerald, having mounted his hunter in the stable-yard the next morning, and waving an adieu to his female belongings, whom he espied looking at him with admiring eyes from one of the windows of the house, emerged into the road *en route* to meet the hounds at Benderby Cross Roads, he little thought at the moment what an eventful day it was destined to be for him. Nothing of importance happened until he passed Wattleton Wood, when an old magpie flew up into a tree, followed quickly by another.

'Hallo!' exclaimed Gerald, as he promptly took off his hat, 'what's the old saying?—Two for a wedding, isn't it? By Jove! perhaps it's an omen. Who can tell? I remember, now I come to think of it, Jack Longbow declaring to me that he saw a magpie as he looked out of the railway-carriage window going to the Derby in Kingcraft's year, and backed Lord Falmouth's horse in consequence, because my lord's colours and the magpie's

were similar ; but, then, Jack's such a confounded liar, one can never believe a word he says. Two for a wedding, eh?' he repeated, with a sigh. 'Ah, well, I fear it don't mean much in my case ;' and, dismissing the omen from his mind, Gerald got on to a friendly piece of turf at the side of the road, and trotted gently on to the meet.

Benderby Cross Roads was but an indifferent fixture at the best of time. Foxes were scarce in that part of the country, the land was nearly all arable round about, the woods (of which there were many) deep and holding, and a good run from there an exception rather than a rule. Consequently the crack men of the hunt were wont to turn out on their worst horses, and devote most of their energies to gossip, much consumption of the fragrant weed, and friendly interchange of flasks. To-day's sport turned out pretty much the same as usual.

A fox was found, after a long delay, in Dinglebury Dean, who, refusing to break at any price—though he hadn't the excuse of being mobbed, for there was a very small field—was eventually chopped in covert. 'And serve him right, too!' as the huntsman very justly observed, with an air of contempt, as he threw him to the hounds. They then trotted on to a small wood called Scrubbard's, where another fox was quickly found, who broke at once ; but a lot of coverts lying close together just here, they only ran him from one to the other, finishing up by eventually getting back to Dinglebury Dean, in whose boggy recesses they lost him ; and by this time, it being past four o'clock, it was voted waste of time drawing for another fox, and the word was consequently given for home. Not much of a day to record, certainly !

We must now hark back to Gerald Massey and his doings.

That gentleman, when the hounds *did* find, being busily engaged in a delightful gossip with several of his friends, was in consequence rather behindhand—a very unusual thing for him when there was real business doing ; therefore he might have been seen shoving his horse along at a very great pace, in order to catch up the leaders, who were at the further end of the next field.

As he was galloping along a heavy ploughed field he suddenly heard a shout behind him, and the plaintive sound of 'Catch my horse!' was wafted to his ear on the breeze.

Looking round he espied a loose horse coming along in his wake, and in the far distance his late rider, whom he recognised



Catching the Doctors Horse.

See page 87.

1870

as a sporting doctor living in those parts gesticulating wildly. Another glance in the direction of the hounds showed him that they had just run their fox to the first of the woods we have described as being so close together, consequently there was no particular hurry; so, pulling up a bit, he made a dash at the doctor's errant steed as he tried to rush past him, and succeeded in catching hold of his bridle—no doubt much to that noble animal's disgust. He then proceeded to take him back to where his plump master was toiling and sobbing along in his heavy jack-boots over the clayey, sticky ground.

The worthy doctor—McDougal by name—was so grateful that he scarcely knew how to express his thanks.

'Eh! but you're—but you're a good falla, Mr. Gerald, to catch that runaway beestie!' panted the little doctor, as the pair came up. 'I thought I would never see him again the dee, I can tell you. I reely don't know how to expriss me thanks to you—with hounds rinning, too. If you'll joost increase the obligeetion by holding his head for me whilst I get into the saddle again, I won't deteen you anöther second.'

Accordingly Gerald held his horse whilst the doctor, who was stout and fat, climbed into the saddle, and the pair then rode on together.

Now, catching another man's horse in the hunting-field is a very ordinary occurrence, but in this particular instance, as it turned out, the catching of the doctor's runaway steed by Gerald was just about the very best day's work that young gentleman ever did. When the hounds were ordered home, the worthy medico and Gerald, whose ways were both in the same direction, forthwith joined company, and, having lit cigars, proceeded to jog home in an amiable and leisurely manner.

'You've been away, I hear, doctor,' began Gerald; 'my aunt told me last night she sent for you one day, and had to put up with your assistant—not the same thing in her eyes, I can tell you; for she swears by you. Where have you been? Your beloved "Land o' Cakes" again, eh? I tell you what,' laughed Gerald, 'I believe you've a special tap of whisky over there that you go over expressly to drink! What? or is it the Hieland lasses you're so fond of? or the porridge—or parritch, as you call it—eh? my old Rob Roy Macgregor O!'

'Ah, ye're verra facetious!' grinned back the doctor; 'and ye're quite correct, for I've been stopping with mee relections in Edinboro' and Aberdeen for the last three weeks;

and as for the toddy, why, it was no so bad as you may imagine, and it was generally the sma' hoors before I got to me rest, for when the hot water and the limons, and the sugar and the whiskee, are on the table, mee releetions, I may tell you, are verra hard to move—verra hard *indeed!*' repeated the jolly doctor, with a sly twinkle in his eye. 'By the wee,' continued the doctor, 'talking of my releetions reminds me that whilst I was in Edinboro' I haird something from one of them, the tellin' of which might be of some sort of sairvice to you; and to show my gratitude to you for catching my runaway horse just noò, why, I'll releet it to you, if you care to listen.'

Gerald expressed his readiness, and, having lit another cigar, was all attention.

'Noo,' said the doctor, 'I don't like, ye'll understand, encouragin' gamblin' amongst young men, and the last thing in the world I would do would be to do any harm to your good aunt's (for whom I have the greetest respect and esteem) nephew; but I know—at least, I've heard (here the doctor winked)—that you're verra fond of a bit of reecin' occasionally. Noo, for me own part, I see no more harm in a man standing to win his ten or fifteen thousand pounds on a race than in speculatin' in shares in this or that reelway, or mine, as the case may be, though the world at large, I believe, thinks differently. That's neither here nor there; I'm only giving me own opinion in the matter. Well, what I've got to tell ye is this. When I was in Edinboro' I came across my cousin, Jock Cunningham. Noo, Jock is, and always was, verra partial to the Turf—in fac', at this present time he has some horses in treenin' at John Osborne's at Middleham. Noo, Jock is connected, through his wife, with the great Scotch turfite, Mr. Barclay, of Drummabeg; and he is not only verra intimate with him, but he has the entire management of all his reecin' stud. Well, Mr. Barclay, it appears—for I didna know it until Jock told me—has a horse entered in this year's Two Thousand and Derby—Quentin Durward his neem is—that is by no means a favourite with the public, but is thought verra highly of indeed by the steeple. In fac', my cousin Jock tells me—this is in strict confidence recollect, Mr. Gerald—that they think he is quite certain to win the double event, and most likely the Leger into the bargain. John Osborne, who trains him, will ride him, and there is no doubt, though he is at long odds now, he will be a verra great favourite for the Derby, especially if he wins the Two Thousand.

Mr. Barclay, too, is a verra rich man, and backs his horses very heavily when he does back them. So, not being at all avairse myself to winning a little money—that is to say,' added the doctor, with a grin, 'if I see my way without much risk, why, I joost told my cousin Jock to invest feefty pounds for me on the colt for the Guineas, and the same on him for the Derby, whilst he's at a lang price, which he promised to do. You can tak' my informeection, of coorse, for what it's worth,' wound up the doctor, pulling up at a turn of the road where the pair had to separate; 'but me own candid opinion is that Quentin Durward is somethin' quite out of the common, and, you may be quite certain of this, that mee cousin Jock would na have tauld me about him if he did not think so too. And now, good-bye, Mr. Gerald. My thanks again to you for catching my horse; and if you'll do me the honour of coming and having a wee bit dinner wi' me to-morrer night, we'll discuss the prospects of Quentin Durward once more over a glass o' whisky toddy such as, I'll weeger, you don't get down in these parts in a month o' Sundays.'

And Gerald having cordially accepted the hospitable doctor's invitation, the pair shook hands, and rode off in different directions.

CHAPTER III.

THE bell has rung, the course is cleared by the A division of police in their usual scientific fashion, and the numbers of the horses engaged in the Derby have just gone up with a slap to the top of the telegraph-board.

Doctor McDougal's tip, Quentin Durward, having succeeded in winning the Guineas in a canter, is now a red-hot favourite for the great race at Epsom; and our friend Gerald Massey is, in consequence, in a suppressed state of excitement that is almost indescribable. Inspired by the doctor's tip, he determined, on the principle of 'faint heart never winning fair lady,' to 'go for the gloves,' as he called it. With that object in view, he lost no time in backing Quentin Durward, not only for the Two Thousand and Derby, but for the double event as well; of course, getting on at a very long price for the latter contingency. No wonder he was excited, for if the colt *did* succeed in winning the Derby, he (Gerald) would receive on settling-day a sum of money rather over than under twenty thousand pounds.

And now the horses are seen emerging from the paddock,

and down they come, one after the other, in their canter past the Stand, headed by the favourite, at the sight of whom a murmur of admiration bursts forth from the lookers-on. 'He can't lose, I don't really believe. What do you say, doctor?' said Gerald, turning round to our old friend, who had come up expressly to town to stay with Gerald for the event.

'Eh,' responded the doctor, 'he's a bonny bit of goods, indeed; but,' added he, with his usual caution, 'it behoves us not to be too confident. "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," you must recollect; and mee cousin Jock tauld me just noo in the Paddock that Sir Joseph's horse, Sancho Panza, is an inimy to be dreaded, and I noticed him going down, and I must own to being afreed of him, for, in my opinion, he's a verra fine goer. However, we shall know directly, and meanwhile we'll hope for the best.'

'They're off! See! they're streaming up the hill, and half of them tailed off already! Now they're out of sight for a moment!'

'Ah! here they come round the corner! By Jove! Sancho Panza's leading, and looks uncommon like winning. Now for the favourite!'

'Hurrah! here comes the blue jacket and silver braid! Johnny Osborne's got his whip out, and is flogging already though! That don't look healthy.'

'Yes; but so is Wells on Sancho! The two are coming right away from their field. Go it, Sancho!'

'Now then, Johnny! My word, what a race! A dead heat for a "pony!"'

'Not a bit of it! No. 7's won! Hooray! hooray!' And Gerald Massey, unable to control his feelings any longer, shies his hat up in the air, and grasping the more placid doctor by the arm, drags him off without more ado to drink, without a moment's loss of time, the health of Quentin Durward, who has just managed to win the Derby by about the shortest head ever witnessed, even by Mr. Justice Clark.

* * * * *

'Well, Gerald, you've fairly astonished me! Why, boy, how on earth have you managed it?' exclaimed Mr. Townley, on the Monday afternoon after the Derby, surveying, at the same time, twenty brand-new Bank of England notes for a thousand pounds each, which his visitor had spread out for his inspection on the table at which he was sitting. 'A friend of yours gave it

you did he? Quentin Durward, do you say? Why, hang it! now I think of it, that's the name of the horse that won the Derby last week! Ah, I see it all now! You've been having a turn at the wheel of Fortune, and won a prize, eh? Well, you've got it, and so there's nothing more to be said. I heartily congratulate you,' said the old gentleman, shaking his young friend warmly by the hand. 'I'll keep to my word in the matter as regards settlements, you may be sure, and only too glad to do so, only no more betting "an you love me, Hal." And now go upstairs and talk to Blanche. I don't mind telling you, young Flummery has been here a goodish deal lately, and has been more than attentive, but between you and me I don't think he has the ghost of a chance, especially now. So get away with you!' wound up Mr. Townley. 'I fancy you'll find your lady-love in the conservatory—she was there just before you came—and my advice is, "Go in and win!"'

* * * * *

And that is how he won her.

THE SMARTEST WHIPPER-IN IN ENGLAND.

By CUTHBERT BRADLEY.



LOVELY Lucy Brocklesby, with the regularity of clockwork, went each morning to the hall-door and cracked her hunting-whip three times. These rifle-like reports in no way destroyed the sensitive drum of her ear, as some of the nervously inclined old ladies, who started at the sounds, prophesied and hoped it would do.

On the contrary, by regular practice she attained such a nicety of judgment, as to the quality of each report, that by their sounds she obtained the weather forecast for the day. When the whip cracked with a sharp report, that seemed to ring again, like a Martini-Henry rifle, depend upon it there was frost in the air, and the ground as hard as nails. But when it went off, so to speak, like a damp squib, regularly hanging fire, sounding thick and dull, there was moisture in the air, and the ground rideable. To the well-trained ear, the whip reports also told of degrees between these two extremes, and Miss Lucy had been

heard to say, that her hunting-whip was the only weather-glass she believed in, and never consulted any other; but, unless equally expert in handling a hunting-whip, do not allow yourself, dear reader, to be dissuaded from tapping the glass of your barometer each morning, or depend upon it there will be a job for the coroner.

Lucy Brocklesby was an only child, and lived with her mother, the respected and generally beloved widow of General Brocklesby. At an early age the young lady had shown a preference for outdoor sport, to the more formal pleasures of drawing-room society. She was always out and about with her dogs, and, except to go to church, never wore a pair of gloves until she was seven years old. At eight she could drive and groom a pair of billy-goats, and astonished the early risers of the little Boro', where she lived, by being seen betimes at exercise with the two goats, because some old groom had told her that the early morning dew was good for their legs.

Now that she was grown up, and as beautiful a 'sweet seventeen' as ever was beheld, she kept bantams and threatened to walk a foxhound puppy in the back garden.

Fortunately about this time a rich old bachelor uncle was sent by his medical advisers to live at the Boro', in order to drink the waters, and take in as much air as possible, with a view to bringing himself down a few stone; he therefore in due course arrived with his servants and horses, but when he found that the M. F. H. only hunted his hounds three days a-week, he added a pack of beagles to his own establishment. In his younger days, Captain Galler, or 'The Nunks' as his niece christened him, had been very keen on 'currant-jelly' sport, and owned a pack of harriers down in Cornwall. But when the Republican Ground Game Act came in and spoilt sport, he sold his harriers, in disgust with the whole concern.

'The Nunks' rented a big place near the Boro' with 3000 acres attached, spared no expense over his beagle-pack, built a miniature kennel, and appointed himself master and huntsman. Having accomplished all this, he considered himself fully justified in calling the pack after his own name, 'Captain Galler's Beagles;' but nobody in the Boro' ever thought or spoke of the little pack of beagles under that *nom de guerre*; they were always spoken of, as 'Miss Lucy's hounds.'

Lucy was constantly at the kennel, for 'The Nunks,' finding

his blooming niece a girl after his own heart, had appointed her whipper-in to the beagles.

The whip-cracking each morning dated from the time of her appointment, when her uncle presented her with the whip, and she immediately set to work to make herself proficient for the post.

The Liliputian beagle-kennel was located away from everything in the park rented with the big place; and here the trusty servant Tom Towler, the boiler and factotum, reigned supreme. In appearance he was a typical square-mugged, beetroot-faced boiler, done up in a claret-coloured waistcoat and overalls.

Miss Lucy, or 'Me Lady,' as the old boiler always called her, quite won his heart by her enthusiasm in all kennel matters, and he took a great pride in tutoring her in the duties attending the post of whipper-in.

'Now, "Me Lady," what I ses is, dog language with hounds is everything; you'll have to improve yourself a bit better, or else they won't take no notice of what you say to 'em,' said the boiler, as he went round the kennel with Miss Lucy for the morning's inspection.

'I know it, Towler, and I've been sucking lozenges all night, so that I might be in voice to rate 'em this morning at exercise.'

'Dim the lozenges, "Me Lady!"' said the boiler, respectfully, but enthusiastically; 'you wants to scold like a jay, regular harsh and quick. "G-e-t a-w-a-i b-o-i-c-k, Game Boi, 'anging about; g-e-t a-w-a-y b-o-i-c-k!" You mustn't mind me telling you, "Me Lady," because I can learn you a bit; I've been at it now two-and-twenty year.'

'Now, Tom, I'll make a bargain with you: if you'll teach me all the dog language you know, I'll stand Godmother to your baby—there!'

'Lor, "Me Lady," the missus will be fine and pleased,' said the boiler, taking off his hat and smiling all over his face, which resembled a red sunset. 'You ain't the first by a good many as I've taught, but afore I've done with yer I'll turn you out the smartest whipper-in in England.'

'Thank you, Tom. Now just run over some of the hallos, that I don't do to your satisfaction, and I'll improve by next time.'

'Most 'appy, "Me Lady;" then you can run 'em over to yourself at any odd moments in the day, or if you should happen to wake in the night.'

‘As you give the hallos, I’ll prick ’em down in score on paper, so as to practise them over when I am at home.’

‘Now, “Me Lady,” as you really is in earnest, you mustn’t mind putting that pretty mouth of yours out of shape when you does hallo!’

‘All right, Tom,’ said Lucy, laughing, ‘I’ll copy you.’

The boiler then contorted his great swiggy mouth and rubicund visage as though it were made of india-rubber, and gave thrilling hallo after hallo right from the very bottom of his heart, or the fourth button of his waistcoat, as he politely told Miss Lucy.

The sound seemed almost to lift the roof, and set off the whole kennel of beagles and the three fox-terriers in full chorus.

‘Now, “Me Lady,” it’ll be good practice for you to go and read the Riot Act to them,’ said Tom, leaving off halloing and nearly purple in the face.

Up jumped Lucy, roused to ecstasy by the inspiring sounds she had just heard, and screamed, ‘Hi! hi! hi there! s-i-l-ence! Kennel up there, will yer?’

The twelve and a half couples silenced at once, and grumbly hopped up on their bench with all the gravity of pigmy foxhounds.

‘Well done, “Me Lady,” you’ll soon talk and cry to them proper,’ said Tom Towler, proudly.

The little pack were not very level at present; twelve inches at the shoulder, all through, was Tom’s ambition, and what he hoped for in time, for he liked the most stuff in the least room. To this end he kept drafting the big beggars, as the smaller ones came to hand to take their places. Tom preached the doctrine of straight legs for beagles. He took his model from the fox-terrier, who, although small, could hold his own with fox-hounds. A crooked-legged beagle he never ‘could abide,’ and in his opinion they were always the first to go lame.

An old beagle now gave tongue, and all the others jumped down from the bench and whined with delight as Captain Galler entered the feeding-room, attired in a white kennel macintosh, that must have measured yards round the waist.

‘How are you, my dear girl? you look a positive Hebe done up in white macintosh; come and kiss your old uncle. What’s old Towler up to?’

‘He’s teaching me, Nunkey dear,’ said Lucy, embracing her superior officer, the master and huntsman.

‘Ah, my dear girl! he’ll teach you more tricks in a week than any one else could in a fortnight.’

‘Will you see the pack out on the flags, Sir?’ said Tom Towler, touching his hat.

‘Yes, by all means, Towler: bring ’em out. What are you waiting for?’ said the uncle, after a pause, still holding on to the arm of his lovely niece.

‘Beg pardon, Sir,’ said Tom, drawing himself up and touching his hat, but with a merry twinkle in his eye; ‘it ain’t my duty to unkennel them—it’s the whipper-in’s work.’

‘Ha, ha! Capital! You see, Tom knows his place! Now, my dear, do your duty. Egad! I’ve been beagling five-and-forty years now, but I declare I’m fonder of it than ever. I never saw such a dooced good-looking whipper-in in all my life—did you, Tom?’

‘Lord bless her, Sir, no!’ said Tom.

Lucy threw back the barred door, and the pack flocked into the day-yard, and swarmed round the legs of the uncle and the boiler like a hive of bees.

‘Down! down! Get down, will you, Clamorous!’ shouted the master to a bouncing puppy beagle. ‘Here, Musical. Musical, old girl, come and show yourself! Now Lucy, she’s the beagle to carry away with you in your mind’s eye. Look at her beautiful shoulders, and legs as true as a pair of compasses, and the most perfect-shaped feet you ever saw on a beagle. Egad! if she had been a woman, she would have had her head turned long ago by flattery!’

‘Don’t talk such nonsense, Nunkey dear; you are an incorrigible old bachelor, and so don’t know any better!’

‘Ah, well, my dear, I should make a poor show in double harness,’ laughed the uncle. ‘But what say you to a run in the snow to-morrow with these little hare persecutors? The hounds don’t hunt this weather—it isn’t safe to ride!’

‘Why, nothing could be better; and a run in the snow will do you a world of good, Nunkey dear, for you haven’t got any thinner since the frost set in!’

‘Well, yes,’ said the uncle, pondering; ‘but, of course, some one will have to be mounted, because the beagles might run away from us; and I think, Towler, if you will see about the shoes being taken off the yellow cob, I’ll ride him.’

II.

THE gallant Captain Galler, as huntsman and master, bestrode his fat cob the next morning, and rode through the Boro' behind his beagle pack to the place of rendezvous. He flattered himself on the immense popularity of himself and his beagles, for every one turned out for a run with the new institution. Deluded man!—but there, all men are alike! It was not him, or his little 'currant-jelly' dogs, that all these young men ran after, but the smartest whipper-in in England, attired in short dark-blue skirts. It was the lovely Lucy, who so deftly wielded the magic charm, that kept together the beagles and the people, for was not she the queen of hearts in the pigmy pack?'

Very majestic she looked this morning as she walked along in the centre of the pack, keeping a sharp look-out to see that they did not chop any cottager's cat that might be incautious enough to cross their path. Everybody was astir, and all the old women and children were at their cottage doors to wave their hands to 'Miss Lucy and her dogs.'

Behind trooped the field, and all the youths for miles around, with young Raffles at their head, who had been chosen by Lucy to carry the second whip, because he had long legs and could run. There were the boys from the Rectory, and the Curate, who always ran with the beagles unless it were a saint's day or a Friday. Then there was Nibbs, the little red-headed reporter of the local weekly *Trumpeter*, who, with the practice he obtained chronicling the beagling runs, made quite a smart sporting correspondent when he did not allow his admiration for the head-whip to run away with him. Joe, the once confirmed poacher, but now, under Miss Lucy's influence, fast reforming, and taking to mole-catching instead. Farmers and their sons who simply adored Miss Lucy, for she always interested herself in their pursuits, and 'took tea' with their wives and daughters. All the choir-boys, with red comforters and an admonition from the Curate not to shout or tally-ho, or they would spoil their voices for the Christmas carols.

'Good morning, Mr. Barker! How are you?' said Lucy, shaking hands with a nice-looking old farmer, mounted on a cream-coloured pony. He was the only one of the party, excepting the master, that was mounted.

'Middlin', thank you, Miss! You see I don't get no younger,



'The smartest whipper-in in England.'

and Doctor Squills come yesterday, and I ses to him, ses I, "Doctor, my insides is wore out!" and he ses, "You are right, John, and I cannot put you in new uns, or else I would, but I'll patch you up as well as I can." So here I am! thank the Lord!

'That's right! there's nothing like a bit of sport to keep you going this cold weather,' said Lucy cheerily. 'Besides, we want you to show us where to find a hare!'

'I shouldn't wonder, Miss,' said old Barker, forgetting all his aches and pains; 'if we wasn't to happen on a hare down the hedge-row on yon side my ten-acre close, there is one in general sits there—isn't there, Joe?'

But Poacher Joe hung his head and evaded the question.

'I really shouldn't like to say, Muster Barker!'

'Hie, hie, you fellows! keep back!' shouted the master, marshalling his forces; 'give the beagles room, and range yourselves out across the field, and tap anything above snow likely to hold a hare!'

Turning off the beaten tracks of the roads we floundered into the uncertain depths of the fields, for the snow had drifted in the furrows, and the best going was on the tops of the ridges. The little beagles spread out like a fan over the snowy coverlet, which showed up their rich markings to advantage.

At the hedges the competition was keen amongst the young men for the privilege of dragging Miss Lucy through the gaps.

All of a sudden a hare bounced up from her form as the master's steady-going cob almost put his foot on the top of her, upsetting his gravity and nearly tumbling the worthy man off.

'Hie, hie! Mark hare! Where am I off to? Tally ho! Whoa ho, you brute! Gently, can't you!' shouted the master all of a flurry, as he struggled back into his saddle and recovered his hat and reins.

Every one's spirits rose like mercury, and all shouted and waved their arms in the sudden excitement, as though it were necessary to frighten poor puss and make her run faster. She sailed down the field at a cracking pace, with one ear up and the other down, and disappeared through the hedge into the next field as though she were going to run straight into the middle of next week.

'First of all, old Melody got on the trail and gave tongue, then they all came together with a crash of music and went down the field with a breast-high scent, in full chorus.

It was a case of legging it now at your best pace, and prancing through the snow we all went as keen as mustard for sport.

Through the hedge the little pack went, and dashed out straight across the next field, when they were at once at fault and feathering about in all directions.

A hare is an uncommonly clever animal, though some people think she is mad; but she is more cunning than the fox, and adopts stratagems to save her life far beyond any of his wiles.

Lucy was soon amongst the pack with her whip, and, rating them soundly, turned them to the master, who cantered up and lifted the pack to the view-halloo of two rustics who gesticulated frantically. They had seen the hare pop through the hedge, run up alongside it, and squat in the dried grass at the top, where she sat watching the puzzled pack.

The beagles got on the line again and hunted up the hedge in Indian file, and puss, finding her persecutors up to her shift, made good her escape.

'She's on the same route she ran last week!' said Farmer Barker, as he gave his pony a fillip with his ash-plant, and made a wide circuit to a gate.

'We shall catch her yet, Muster Barker!' said Poacher Joe, whose uppermost thought was slaughter.

The hunted hare appeared to be ringing round as she crossed the next two fields, so some of the wary ones cut a good corner. The heavy-going and the pace were thinning out the large field of sportsmen that started in the morning; many stood still, altogether, others climbed up trees and on stiles to view the sport afar off, hoping the hare would ring round and come back to them.

'Let me offer you a stirrup-leather, Miss Lucy,' said Farmer Barker gallantly, as he rode up to the plucky whipper-in plodding along in the wake of the beagles. 'I doubt it's shocking deep going, and it may help you a bit!'

The pace was telling on everybody, and Lucy gladly availed herself of the timely help; while Farmer Barker's homely hay-and-straw talk, and his stirrup-leather, helped along wonderfully.

Fortunately there was now another check, near some turnips where sheep were feeding, or nothing would have had a chance with beagles on such a day. Lucy took the opportunity of counting up the pack, and finding a couple were missing, two of the longest-

legged young men who were left in the hunt, volunteered to go back and look for them.

The master on his cob, who had been carrying on a stern-chase, being necessitated to make wide circuits for gates, now appeared on the scene. He cast to the right, then to the left, and hunted up and down the hedge, and began to think that he was foiled of his fur, and must look for a fresh hare.

All of a sudden up jumped puss, from no one knew where, half the pack must have hunted over her. Away the little beagles raced for two fields or more, when she was again viewed, looking as stiff as a board.

At this exciting moment of the chase the most active young man left in it went a header into a snow-drift, and was heard of no more that day.

Lucy, with the help of old Barker's stirrup-leather, was top of the hunt, with only the Uncle, Poacher Joe, and the red-headed little reporter Nibbs, in her wake.

'Get to 'em, Lucy!' roared the master as he found himself and his cob pounded by an unnegotiable fence, over which he saw the beagles racing into their hare.

'Go on, Miss Lucy!' said Farmer Barker. 'Odds rot it! there isn't a gate for me and my pony to get through, within a mile. I wouldn't have missed the finish for anything!'

Then there came a yell from Poacher Joe, who in his hurry had put his foot into an old forgotten snare set in the hedge.

Nibbs, the little reporter, dwelt a moment on the top bar of the fence, to put down, it was said, a shorthand-note for his account of the run, but in reality being 'clean pumped,' and so extinguished his chance.

The only one up at the kill, and in time to rescue the remains of poor puss from the beagles, was 'the smartest whipper-in in England.'

THE RANKSBRO' POUND.

By 'TOM MARKLAND.'

IF you've hunted in Gallia of course you know
 How they follow 'Tantivy' at Fontainebleau,
 How they pound through the alleys from noon till dark,
 Like King Jamie the Scotchman in Greenwich Park,
 For there's never a hedge nor a ditch to clear;
 They can fearlessly ride, for there's nought to fear.
 Now, Count Émile Boulanger, St. Claud de Pré,
 Had been cock of the walk for many a day—
 At least cock of the rides in France, I mean—
 And he longed for an out-and-out change of scene.
 Some perfidious Anglais he came across
 Said, 'Go it, Émile, my boy!' 'Go it, old hoss!'
 So his heart got aglow with aspiring fires,
 There was nothing would suit the Count but the 'Shires.'
 When his mind was made up, being French, you'll guess,
 The first question to answer was;—How to dress?
 With his valet he held a council of two,
 Then a fox-hunting print they brought out to view:
 It was Firr and 'the ladies' at Brooksby Hall,
 So they copied old Tom, '*cheesecutter*,' and all!

* * * * *

When September's leaves had grown shrivelled and sere,
 And the meet at old Kirby was drawing near,
 This good knight of St. Hubert, with coursers ten,
 Was admitted as one of the 'Melton men.'
 So the 'First' found him eager to make a start,
 With the aid of his valet he'd 'dressed the part';
 But with deference due to the 'nation grand,'
 That lays claim o'er all others in taste to stand,
 An impartial critic was bound to confess
 That the 'get-up' was—well—not quite a success!
 E'en the stable-boys thought they had hit the mark,
 As they whispered 'First Season!' and 'Here's a lark!'
 And what time he appeared at the roadside green,
 Where in days now departed 'The Gate' was seen,
 Though Tom Firr is no tippler, he saw that morn
 Something like to a rival with 'Jovial Quorn.'

Now, the 'find' at 'thè hill' that we never knew fail,
 And the Ranksbro' run, are no part of my tale:

Pennell Elmhirst in prose, and the poets in rhyme,
Have done justice, I trow, to that theme sublime.
But I follow the fortunes of Claud de Pré,
And the pranks that he played on the opening day.
He was mounted, of course, on his gamest steed,
At Tattersall's vaunted for jumping and speed ;
He was named 'The Outsider,' though, truth to say,
A rare 'good un' to go,' a 'good un' to stay.'
But you know 'second nature' is wondrous strong,
And the Count was scarce clear of the straining throng
When a 'rasper' in front made their minds divide,
For the horse would go over, the Count abide.
Though a pull at the bridle secured a check,
The poor Count was embracing 'Outsider's' neck.
He'd a laughable struggle his seat to gain,
But a gate in the corner disclosed a lane
Where the biped could sit and the quadruped go—
It was just for the world like to Fontainebleau.

This was all very well till it found an end,
When the troubles began for our Gallic friend,
For the road became lost in a great 'grass ground,'
While the pair were in hearing of horn and hound.
'The Outsider' seemed bent on going the pace,
And belying his name as regards the chase.
Oh! the binders he broke! the rails that he smashed!
The farmers who fumed! the 'wigs' that they 'dashed!'
As the neck-hugging Count, like Gilpin of old,
Charged through homestead and paddock, through fence and fold!
It was matter for wonder through all to see
How he stuck to the pigskin by strength of knee.
Till at last this strange compound of man and horse
Reached the ten-acre field by Ranksbro' Gorse,
Where 'The Outsider' swerved, for the thorns grew high,
And the horse was not foaled that the fence could 'fly.'
Now our Count, though a Frenchman, had lots of pluck,
He would bid for a finish though out of luck,
So he skirted the hedge at pretty quick rate,
Till he found what he wanted—a five-barred gate.
He'd no thought of a leap, for he'd ridden too hard,
Had he liked it at all, but Hodge was on guard,
And at sight of bright silver Hodge thought not twice,—
No! he turned and opened the gate in a trice;
Then he *locked* it, and stolidly stumped away,
While the Count and 'Outsider' pursued their way.
But they didn't get far, for they quickly found
That the fences were much the same height all round.

Now, you'll grant this was hard on the Count de Pré,
 In a cul-de-sac at the end of the day,
 With the ringing 'Whoo-whoop!' all the hills resound,
 While the Count and 'Outsider' are fast 'in Pound.'
 They had plenty of time thât 'Pound' to explore,
 For Hodge didn't return for an hour or more;
 And when that same rustic turned up with the key,
 'Have you made many holes in the fence?' says he.
 Cries the Count, 'Vait von vhide! you laugh oder zide!
 I not go back to France till I learn to ride!'
 So the Count de Pré chose a steadier steed,
 And he asked Charley Downs to give him a lead.
 Though his training was faulty, his heart was right,
 He soon learned to 'sit back' with the foremost flight;
 He got 'in at the death,' and he dressed in style,
 Then he sported a Lincoln and Bennett's tile;
 So, before Croxton races in spring came round,
 He could laugh at old Hodge and his Ranksbro' Pound.

MR. JORKINS' FISHING-ROD.

By J. HARRINGTON KEENE.

IT was during one of those delicious after-dinner smokes so dear to the chatty sportsman that I first became acquainted with Mr. Jorkins' fishing-rod. I was spending the latter half of my yearly month's holiday on the beautiful Test—absolutely revelling in the unfailing and various sport amongst the trout of that river—with my friend Lowrie, whose fly-fishing prowess none thereabouts could dispute or challenge. On this particular day we had done exceedingly well, and, dinner despatched, we had adjourned to his snug sanctum to recall the incidents of the day—how such and such a fish had broken him at such a spot, what fly he refused and what he took, and how I had foul-hooked another 'edg-dolloger,' and landed him after twenty minutes' hard work. And so we drifted in our talk, till Lowrie said,—

'By-the-by, I knew there was something I wanted to tell you—a most curious thing. I was fishing above the cart-bridge at Smearpots, and hooked what turned out to be about a pound fish, when, just as I had killed him and was bringing him to the net, a rascally jack came up—about four or five pounds—and coolly seized the trout, and broke me. I saw him plainly. It was just as coolly and leisurely done as I take this light. After

getting the fish he sailed away with it crosswise in his mouth without any haste, but just as a big dog might do with a shin bone.* I must tell Harris to get the net out for that gentleman.'

'Don't you fish for the jack?' I asked.

'No; at least, not often. Sometimes in the winter, when there's nothing else to do, I throw a spinning-bait. My keeper wires all he can come across. That's the rod in yon case I use when I do fish for them. Take it out; it's a curiosity.'

I did so, and, sooth to say, it was a curiosity, and resembled nothing so much as that rod figured in the Book of St. Alban's, which, the author tells me, was made of ash as thick as your arm (*arme grete*), and ferruled with hoops of iron. It was about ten feet long—the butt of ash, and the remainder of hickory and lance, with a stout whalebone top. Its weight was immense.

'By Jove, Lowrie!' I said, as I put the rod together; 'you are a muscular Christian!'

'Oh, I didn't have it built myself,' he returned; 'that is one of the real old-fashioned sort, and was given me by a friend of the *pater's* on his deathbed. Poor, dear old Jorkins, how we have laughed at him and his rod! And the tackle was correspondingly strong. His line was thick enough for the heaviest salmon that ever drew the water of life; and as for his bait and hooks, the triplets were grapnels. Here—that's one of his spinning flights!' handing me a formidable array of triplet hooks of terrible size and appearance.

'That flight,' continued my host, 'I kept as a memento of the funniest thing I ever saw in angling. Jorkins, you must understand, was past middle age when he began to fish, and the first day he ever had was with the *pater* and I, when, with some of our strongest tackle, he hooked and landed a sixteen-pound jack in A—— Lake, and lost another and larger one by the rod and line smashing. Jorkins thereafter was mad after pike. We called him the 'Pikomaniac.' He had that rod built, and furnished himself with tackle as you see, and at every available season he dropped down on us for his beloved sport. Well, one day we were going to —— pond to try for a big 'un said to be there, and, of course, Jorkins must be one of the party. On arriving there we stationed Jorkins, with some bait and his other *impedimenta*, at a likely corner, whilst we went on to a different one; for, let me tell you, it wasn't safe to be within the radius

* Fact.

described by that mighty flight when he was casting. Most industriously the little man worked on with his stalwart tackle, and we, in the excitement of fairly good sport, almost forgot his existence. Presently a terrific yell, followed by a volley of disjointed imprecations, reached our ears, and we turned to where we had left Jorkins—and what a scene met our eyes! There was Jorkins careering rod aloft behind a big dun cow, who, with tail aloft, was galloping away from him through bog and bracken as hard as she could go. What was the matter? We ran after them, and saw that the cow had the hooks stuck in the root of her tail. Jorkins' tackle wouldn't break, and so Jorkins had to follow as best he might. I think I never saw such agility in an elderly fat old gentleman before. But, alas! ere I could overtake him he stumbled and fell headlong into a soft spot of the boggy land, and there was then perforce a solution of continuity—the trace broke, fortunately for the rod, and the bovine fish went away with the hooks—foul-hooked, very! They had to be cut out of the cow's tail!

'How did Mr. J. manage to place them there?' I queried.

'Why, don't you see,' said Lowrie, 'a cow is a most inquisitive creature; and this one must have approached unobserved to investigate the character of the various articles of *virtu* on the ground behind Jorkins. He, innocent man! being absorbed in the elegance and beauty of his casting, never looked behind, and, as the animal turned to go, must have planted the hooks on her tail as he swung the bait round to gather impetus. That's how he explained it.'

'And this was the very flight of hooks?'

'Yes; that was in the early days of his novitiate. Jorkins ultimately became the best caster of a bait I ever saw, though he still used this ponderous weapon. I tried to dissuade him from using it on the Thames, where, as you know, a light bamboo and lancewood rod is *de rigueur*. But it was of no use. Passers-by might laugh and make facetious remarks in reference to the thickness of both man and rod, but Jorkins never flinched. "He wasn't going to lose another thirty-pounder because of a plaguey rod"—that was his word, "plaguey;" "and how could he cut through the 'plaguey' weeds if he had such spiders' web as our tackle?" So we let him alone; and after a certain event, which happened about a twelvemonth before the poor old boy died, it would have been the basest of ingratitude to have laughed at him. It is owing to this event that I cherish the memory of the

good old soul and of his rod. And,' added Lowrie, with unexpected solemnity, 'I thank Heaven the rod and tackle were so strong on that occasion.'

'For goodness' sake let's hear the story, Larrie,' I said, cheerily; 'and don't put on that tragedy face while you're telling it.'

'By all means,' was the reply; 'but you will see that my seriousness is not misplaced when you have heard it. Just pass the lights and the decanter. Thanks!'

'Well, when I was first engaged to my wife her father had a pretty villa at Datchet, and it was quite a customary thing for me to run down on the Saturday with her brothers and stay till Monday. You remember, I was in the City then. After a time I introduced Jorkins—good-humoured old fellow—purely for the girls to laugh at, and they ended by loving him so that he was ever welcome. One day a letter came from old George Keene, the puntsman there, to say that a big trout had been seen feeding above the Victoria Bridge, and would I bring Mr. J. down to try for him. Of course I communicated with Jorkins, and he was all flutter and eagerness to get to the water.

'It was about four in the afternoon when we arrived at Datchet, and, calling on the girls and the old people, we had a cup of tea before starting to the water. Keene had said that the fish fed at about seven, so there was no need to hurry.

"What are you girls going to do this evening?" I asked of Mary—now my wife—the eldest.

"I really don't know. What do you propose?" was the reply.

"Well, you and Tiny bring the boat down to the Bridge where we are fishing, and I'll take you for a moonlight row. Mr. Jorkins can go back in the punt if he doesn't care to come with us."

"Very well, we'll be there by eight. Will that do?" asked Mary.

"Capitally." And so the thing was settled.

'We went down and embarked—more than that, we fished persistently for that trout, and didn't see a sign; whether, as Keene said, because of J.'s heavy tackle, or the indifference of the fish, or both combined, I cannot say. Presently we saw the ladies coming in the distance, and I elected to change boats, but Jorkins determined to try for just another half-hour.

'Now, what occurred in the following quarter of an hour I doubt if you can realise from a bare description. Try and picture

it as I endeavour to place it before you in a few words. As the boat came fairly in view I lay down my rod to watch the skilful way in which my *fiancée* feathers her sculls as she rows her younger sister in the little skiff—a bit too “crank” for ladies, I think to myself. The next moment I notice Mary stops rowing, and Tiny appears to be rising from the back seat. Are they going to change places? Yes; and it is with the greatest anxiety I watch them as, both standing up, they are in the act of passing. This act is never accomplished, for in a second the boat dips to one side, and they are both struggling in the water. What is to be done? No man can swim up stream to them. With a terrific wrench up come the rye-pecks, and Keene and I are punting up towards the drifting boat. The women are nowhere to be seen—yes, now they are, and Tiny is clinging to the boat—but, Heavens! where is Mary? We near the boat, and Keene takes in poor Tiny, and as he does so I see my darling rise twenty yards down stream. I jump overboard in a breath, with a wild, vain cry for her to keep up, and am swimming for more than the value of my life. As I am swimming I am vaguely conscious of something whizzing through the air in the direction of my darling, and instead of her sinking again she seems buoyed up. Now I have reached her, and am striking out for the shore, but before I can reach it the punt is down on us, and strong arms lift Mary into it, and I am also helped in, with a deep “Thank God!” breaking from me. The whisky-flask was emptied of its contents, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing Mary open her eyes. With all haste we were back at Datchet, and by the next morning all were on a fair road to recovery from the shock.’

‘What a providential escape!’ I exclaimed.

‘You may well say that,’ replied Lowrie; ‘but I owe, under Heaven, my dear wife’s life to poor old Jorkins and that rod. As he saw her rise, the ruling spirit strong within him, he threw his heavy bait and hooks at her. I told you he was a wonderful caster. He said the bait fell a few feet beyond, but he drew up the line and fixed the hooks in my poor girl’s clothing, and this, when the strain was put on his strong tackle, kept her up till I reached her, and even then assisted me. The weight of a person in water is comparatively little, you know, owing to the specific gravity of the body corresponding to the weight of the displaced water; and that ancient and ponderous weapon was the means of salvation, as I have tried to describe.



"I am vaguely conscious of something
whirling through the air"

Wm. W. W.

‘He gave it to me some time after language had failed him, but the expressive look in his dying eyes was more eloquent than speech. He quietly expired at last, clasping my wife’s hand, to whom he was much attached. Heigho! That’s a dozen years ago. Pass the whisky!’

STEEPLECHASING IN IRELAND.

By ‘LARKY GRIGG.’

JOCKEYS, AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL.



HAVING in previous numbers descanted upon ‘The Courses,’ and ‘The Horses,’ I now propose to say a few words about ‘The Riders.’

If Ireland has excelled in producing the best chasers, so also has it produced some of the finest cross-country jockeys that ever donned silk, though on the flat it never could produce such artists as Sam Chifney, Buckle, Robinson, Frank Butler, or, later still, Fordham, Cannon, Archer, or Wood! Our flat-race men never had a chance afforded them of becoming shining lights in their profession, as they never had the amount of practice that would enable them to come to the front. There is as much disparity between the steeplechase men of the present time and those of forty or fifty years ago as there is between the horses now and then. A very middling horseman can get up now and keep his animal’s head straight over the modern flying courses, but it was a horse of another colour forty or fifty years ago. Parsons, Persse, Giles, Eyre, and Lord Clanricarde, were the luminaries of the first three decades of the century, and then Jack Dennis and the two McDonoghs came out in ‘the thirties,’ and, curiously enough, all five were Galway men, and ‘the men for Galway’ too.

When steeplechasing was first instituted in England, about 1830, Lord Clanricarde nearly always had a mount in the principal events. The two McDonoghs (Allen and William) were big men, and could not scale less than eleven stone, and that only at a pinch. They had few equals, and no superiors, either in their own day or at any other time, as cross-country horsemen. Allen McDonogh had been riding steeplechases for fifty years, having barely entered his teens when he won a

steeplechase over the old course at Tipperary on a horse called Hugo de Lacy, the property of his uncle, Mr. Doolan; and at this time he only weighed five stone. About the year 1837 McDonogh owned a good horse called Sir William, with whom he won several steeplechases on both sides of the Channel. Sir William was a perfect fencer, but a very erratic customer, and difficult to manage. John Elmore, the dealer, bought him from McDonogh, and sold him to Lord Cranstoun shortly afterwards for 1000*l.* He matched him with Lord Suffield's Jerry for 1000*l.* a-side, four miles over the Quorn country, but Sir William could not be managed by strange hands, and the late Lord Howth, who had a lot of money on the result, sent a special messenger to Galway for McDonogh to ride him for them. Jerry was a strong favourite, and was entrusted to the guidance of Jem Mason, but McDonogh won easily. That was in 1839, and the following year Jerry won the Grand National. At the beginning of 'the forties' McDonogh resided principally in England, where he took part in and won many important steeplechases. In 1843 he brought one of the English cracks of the period, Peter Simple, across the 'herring-pond,' with the avowed purpose of winning the Kilrue Cup of that year; but after one of the most desperate races on record over a 'natural country' he could only get third to Brunette and Milo. In 1844 McDonogh came to reside with Mr. Preston at Bellinter, and during that and the two following years he won no less than nineteen steeplechases on Mr. Preston's peerless mare Brunette. To show his indomitable pluck I will relate an occurrence that took place at Cashel in 1845. He had run second on Brunette for the Rock Stakes, won the next race on The Disowned, and was making the running at the Kiln fence on Mountain Hare for the last race that afternoon. An old woman ran across him, which caused his horse to come a purler, and two of McDonogh's ribs were broken, and he was otherwise severely shaken. Lord Waterford sent him in his carriage into Cashel, and two doctors were in constant attendance on him that night, but to the surprise of all he came out next day and won the Commissioners' Plate on Brunette after a severely contested race.

Mr. McDonogh performed one of the most marvellous feats of horsemanship at Bandon in 1835, when riding Sailor, a horse of his own, for the principal steeplechase there, in which event he met nine of the most noted chasers of the period. When

leading by several lengths Sailor fell over the fourth fence, and another horse leaped clean over McDonogh and Sailor as they were scrambling up, and, worse than all, his bridle broke; but, nothing daunted, McDonogh was up and on his back like a lamplighter, and with his bridle in one hand and his whip in the other steered Sailor over the remaining three fences, and won by a length; but to stop his horse was then the difficulty, but that too was eventually surmounted, and never before or since was such an ovation accorded to man or horse as the latter was led back by the 'scruff of the poll' to scale. He sold Sailor afterwards to Mr. Elmore, who got 'a thou' for him soon after buying him. He won a great steeplechase in 'The Vale' on Cigar, and that same night, when dining with a lot of sporting friends in Northampton, he proposed to raise a subscription for a noted amateur of the period, who had that day been arrested for debt, and laid down 'a pony' to help to liberate him; far more than sufficed for that purpose was in consequence made up on the spot.

In 1850 Allen McDonogh went to reside at the Curragh, where he kept a long string of chasers in training for more than twenty years, and his horses were admitted to be the best jumpers of their time. He had many 'cracks' amongst them, and won no end of races. McDonogh began to ride steeplechases about the year 1822, and in 1867 astonished the younger generation of turfites when he walked out of the dressing-room at Punchestown in a brand new jacket and cap to ride a horse of his called Fairymount for the Downshire Cup. When the horse was being saddled he was made the subject of some banter, but putting his hand to his horse's withers he flew into the saddle, exclaiming, as he did so, 'Some of you youngsters can't do this though!' He was fourth in a field of thirty runners, and in front the greater part of the journey. He sported silk for the last time at Punchestown in 1872, being then in his *sixty-fifth* year.

'Jack' Dennis was another great man between the flags in the fourth and fifth decades of the present century, and rode with the professionals in most of the big chases of his time. If Allen McDonogh can lay claim to the unique honour of having won a steeplechase on a horse without a bridle on, 'Jack' Dennis is perhaps the only man that ever won a cross-country contest on a blind horse, to which performance I have referred in a previous paper.

William McDonogh was little, if anything, inferior to his brother Allen as a cross-country horseman. One of the finest races ever seen took place between the two brothers for the Rock Stakes at Cashel, in 1846. Allen was on his old favourite, Brunette, and William on 'Minor' Powers' Saucepan. For the last mile they ran as it were locked together, but William won on Saucepan at the finish by half a length.

A well known English sportsman laid William McDonogh five 'centuries' to one that he would not get an Irish horse to jump six six-foot walls in fifteen minutes, but he accomplished the feat on Perfection, a little horse of his brother's, in seven minutes.

Lord Howth—father of the present nobleman—was another brilliant performer across country, but he never took to the illegitimate sport with any zest.

Lord Waterford was admitted on all hands to be the greatest sportsman of all time, and one of the leading lights of the steeplechase world from the early part of the thirties to the time of his lamented death in 1859. Though he patronised flat racing extensively, yet his heart was set on the illegitimate branch of the sport, and was never more delighted than when he had picked out an almost unjumpable line, but at the same time he was always ready to don the 'light blue' himself, let the track be ever so trappy. He was a great horseman, and won many important races, but he had one great fault—it would not have been a fault now-a-days—he was always in a hurry, and never could make a waiting race of it under any circumstances, as he always wanted to go in front and stop there. His performance at Eglinton Park in '44, when he won three races the same afternoon with his celebrated chaser Blueskin—two of them by 'short heads'—stand out as an unbeaten record for man and horse; and I well remember seeing him win a 'pile of money' from a lot of officers, over a terrible course near Carrick-on-Suir, a few years before his death. Mr. John Power of Gurteen, or, as he used to be called, 'Minor' Power, was a contemporary of 'The Marquis,' but though he was a good horseman he had not his lordship's fine hands.

Mr. George Henry Moore was another good man under either silk or scarlet, and won the New Melton Stakes at Caher in 1842, beating some of the best men and horses of the period over that extremely difficult course.

'Charlie' Lockwood was a capital rider in 'the forties' when

the big-bank countries were in vogue, and won many races on the Fawn, Absolom, Saucepan, and the other cracks who carried his well-known green banner to the front in many a hard-fought contest over the difficult tracks of the period. Of the other shining lights of that time I may mention Mr. Colgan, to whom the amateurs of his time were unable to concede an ounce.

The two Abbotts were quite at the top of the tree as cross-country horsemen. They were Dublin men, having lived in Wicklow Street, where Switzer & Co. have a drapery establishment at the present time. Tom was the better man of the two, and his riding of Farnham in the Kilrue Cup of '49 was about one of his most artistic performances on this side of the Channel. Johnny Ryan and Jack Debeau were on two good ones—Sir John and Abd-el-Kader—behind him, and for the last mile it was a desperate contest. His riding of the last-named animal in the Grand National of '51 was another masterpiece, as he only won on the post by a short head from Frisbey on Maria Day. Mr. Osborne was most anxious that Abbott should ride the game Arab Chief, and he took off a lot of superfluity the morning of the race in order to get to the weight; but he did do it, and won one of the finest races ever run over Aintree.

Captain McCraith was one of the finest horsemen of his time, or any time. He graduated in a good school, with his uncle 'Billy' Quin of Loughloher, one of the best judges of racing that ever owned a horse, and Mr. Quin had some good animals during his long Turf career.

Captain McCraith was well into years before he began to ride in public, as he only came out about the middle of the fifties, and Lord Waterford was one of the first to discover his extraordinary abilities, and he had several good mounts from him before that prince of sportsmen's lamented death. In the beginning of the sixties McCraith had some good animals of his own, notably the Clown, the Rug, Forager, Con Cregan, and Blush Rose. On all those Captain McCraith won several steeplechases. He won the National Hunt Race at Punchestown in 1861, twenty-six others being behind him. Mr. 'Edwards,' Mr. 'Thomas,' Captain Machell, Bob Exshaw, P. J. Russell, Allen McDonogh, and several other crack men of the period, were riding in that memorable contest. Captain McCraith was a tall, lithe man, and always rode his own horses

with the professionals in handicaps when he could get to the weight. The Rug was about his best horse, and when pitted against another Irish horse, Ace of Hearts, at Carmarthen in February '62, they ran *two dead heats* for a four-mile chase there. Captain McCraith has had no superior as a cross-country horseman in any era or at any time, and for many years anything he rode at Punchestown was sure to be a hot favourite. He was one of the most resolute men that ever crossed a horse, and I well remember seeing him apparently hopelessly 'shut in' by a lot of professionals at a critical part of a race, but, utterly regardless of consequences either to himself or them, he came through with a rush at the last fence, knocking three of them down, and won. His head and hands could not be improved upon, and his seat was perfection. After a race-meeting in Tramore in 1861 he made a curious bet with a local gentleman, who was to ride a grey hunter and carry 18 stone over two miles of the flat course, against the Clown carrying himself (Captain McCraith) and Captain Machell together. The great difficulty was to get the Clown, who was an arrant rogue, to carry double, and he 'downed' several smart chaps in the endeavour to get him to do so; but in the actual race he carried his two pilots to victory in easy fashion. As far as I can remember, Captain Machell took off his boots, got behind McCraith, and put his toes into the stirrup irons, holding on to his partner by means of a belt. Captain McCraith was riding when quite an old man, and no matter how difficult the track might be, and I have seen him ride over some desperate ones, he never funk'd it, and would accept a mount, *with thanks*, from any one.

Mr. James Kelly was a west-country amateur, who won perhaps more races than any man of his time. I think he was riding for more than thirty years, as he won the Westenra Cup on the Cob in '41, '42, and '43, and had many successful mounts for Mr. Westropp and himself. He could always ride 9 stone, and was a most accomplished horseman.

Mr. D. Canny was a Clare gentleman, and though a mute, was one of the finest horsemen of his day. One of Mr. Canny's most artistic performances was in the Corinthian Cup at Punchestown in '59, which he won after a splendid race on Sir Robert, beating the Mr. J. Kelly above referred to on Joe Maley, who, as Old Ben Roc, afterwards got a 'Shop' for the Liverpool.

Mr. R. L. Exshaw and Willie Long were two good Corin-

thians of that time. The last-named won a great race on Lord Clanricarde's Caustic for the National Hunt Race at Punchestown in '64, beating twenty-five of the best 'racing hunters' that ever sported silk in one race. 'Bob' Exshaw was at the top of the tree both over a country and on the flat; and another great man under silk was 'Dick' Newcomen, of Turf Lodge.

J. D. Whyte was another good man between the flags, and was always well up in the big chases from 1860 to the close of the 'seventies.' He won several good races on Mr. Moffatt's Pole Star, Comet, and Lady Spencer. Mr. Moffatt's little black and Lady Spencer were some of the best jumpers of modern times, and Mr. Whyte always had the leg up on them in their public performances.

Mr. Garrett Moore was about the most accomplished horseman of all time, and began his distinguished and lengthy career when quite a boy. He was a mere lad when he won the Tradesman's Plate—a four-mile weight for age race—on a three-year old of McDonogh's, Knight of Australia, at Limerick, and that was the forerunner of very many victories on both sides of the 'herring-pond,' including a Grand National of '79 on Liberator, with whom he won several good races, and would have landed at Liverpool the following year with the old horse, who was top weight, but for Jupiter Tonans, a stable companion, who brought them along by the canal such a dancer that the big weight told on the old horse, and he was beaten in the run home by Empress, to whom he was conceding two stone. Of the many good races I have seen Garrett Moore win, I think his chief victory was on Scots Grey for the Curraghmore Plate, at the Curraghmore Hunt Meeting of '74. The 'Grey' was an arrant rogue, and Mr. Moore jumped the last fence dead level with Will Canavan on Departure. They ran home head and head, and there Mr. Moore sat, as immovable as a statue, fearing the old horse would cut it every moment, but he went on and won on the post by the shortest of heads. It was about the most patient piece of riding ever witnessed, and it was such a close shave that until the numbers went up neither Mr. Moore nor Canavan knew which had won.

Mr. 'St. James' was another great horseman, whose pluck was indomitable, and during his short career on the Turf was riding here, there, and everywhere—even in France. His sad death when riding a Galway-bred horse, Longford, at Sandown Park, in February '78, is well known to all sportsmen. Mr.

'St. James' was an assumed name, his real one being the Hon. R. Greville-Nugent. He headed the list of winners in Ireland on several occasions, and during the ten years he sported silk he must have ridden close on five hundred steeplechases. He was a nice light weight, could always ride 9 stone, and never, in consequence, had to give up a mount, as men of heavier build frequently have to do. He rode with professionals and amateurs, and often took the place of one of the former simply for the sake of the mount. A couple of years before his death I saw him get a very nasty fall riding in a handicap. His own mount, or something else, struck into his face and cut one of his eyebrows nearly off, so that it fell down on his cheek. When he got back to the enclosure a doctor was requisitioned, who stitched up the wound, which was a fearful gash to look at. He had barely finished the sewing process when Mr. 'St. James' went on and dressed for the next race, and won it, too, after a desperate finish. It was the writer who held him whilst under the hands of the doctor, and entreated him not to attempt riding again that day; but it was all of no use, ride he would, and win he did.

Mr. 'J. Appleton' was another star of the Irish Turf at the beginning of 'the seventies.' He was only a middling horseman, but always had good mounts. He wasn't in the same street with Garrett Moore, Mr. St. James, Exshaw, Whyte, Dan Russell, or Hubert Davis. The latter was a Mayo man, and was about as good as any of them. For many years he rode as 'Mr. Oldham,' and he is the only man I ever saw winning a steeplechase in the dark; a feat which he accomplished at Cashel in 1867 (after having a couple of tumbles in the twilight), on his own mare Miss Steele, upon whom he won about thirty races in all.

I need hardly refer to the brothers Beasley, whose deeds in the pigskin are so familiar to all modern sportsmen. Thomas, Harry, James, William, and John Beasley, are the most remarkable quintette of amateur jockeys we have seen in our time or can obtain any record of.

Tommy Beasley graduated under Allen McDonogh, and rode his first great race in his colours on Uhlan for the Grand Stand Plate at Cork in 1871, but, in a field of twenty-nine runners, he could only get second to John Jones on Aurifera. The many successes of the brothers Beasley in Ireland, England, and France, for the past fourteen years, would fill a volume.

Suffice it to say, that no better lot of cross-country jockeys ever donned silk jackets.

Of the farmers in the early stages of steeplechasing, the name of Tom Shea, of Mullinbeg, county Kilkenny, stands out prominently. Tom Shea was a big man, but had few superiors in 'the thirties' and 'the forties' as a cross-country jockey. In later days we had Johnny Walsh and Andy Coghlan, two as good farmers' sons as ever a silk jacket fluttered upon. The former was a Tipperary man, being a son of 'Arty' Walsh, of Roesborough, who for many years kept a lot of good horses; and the latter was a Kilkenny man, whose father, Davy Coghlan, of Curragawn, near Carrick-on-Suir, was an owner of racehorses for close on forty years, and had some clinkers amongst them, and they wanted nothing on the score of riding while Andy held the ribbons.

Amongst the professionals of the first era of steeplechasing, Johnny Ryan, Denny Wynne, Willie Magee, and Jack Debeau, were shining lights. The first named was Henry Lord Waterford's leading jockey, and the finest race over a natural country I have ever seen took place between himself and Debeau at Carrick-on-Suir in November, 1858. Ryan was on Lord Waterford's Ace of Hearts, and Debeau on a mare called Tiney. The Ace was attempting to give her 3st., and Debeau, making good use of his light weight, went away at score, and won, after a desperate race, by half a length.

Johnnie Hanlon, Larry Byrne, Doolan, and George Maloney—the latter a county Limerick man—were also great horsemen; and later still we had Bill Cusack, who was sixty years of age when he ceased to don silk. Johnnie Whelan, and Dan Meany, the last named won the first cross-country contest in Ireland, to which 300*l.* was added—viz., the Kildare Hunt Plate at Punchestown in 1856, which he won on Mr. Irevin's Eugenia, the best cross-country performer that the noted Harkaway ever begot.

Poor Meany, like Mr. St. James, died in harness—or, to put it more correctly, in silk—being killed at Lismore in October, 1865, when riding a horse of the late Earl of Huntingdon in the principal steeplechase there. Paddy Gavin and George Gray were two clinking good ones that, like the elder Beasley, graduated under Allen McDonogh; and Stephen Fleming, James and Bob Murphy, David and Will Canavan, and Tom and Bill Ryan, were about our best men within the past few years.

TOM BLANCHARD'S FIRST WOODCOCK.

By 'BREECHLOADER.'



OM BLANCHARD would have his joke, no matter where enacted or upon whom practised ; and when I took him down from Windsor into —shire to the seat of a rich old maternal uncle of mine (from whom I formed, in my own mind, great expectations, not yet realised, by-the-by), for a few days' trout-fishing, I warned him to be careful, both in word and deed, for my sake. I knew that the Squire was a hater of *practical* jokes ; and Tom gave me his promise on this head, which was sufficient. As for verbal joking, 'it was absurd to suppose he couldn't behave himself towards the old gentleman ;' and so I left that part of the matter open. I only feared, on this head, that Tom's unlimited power of imagination and capacity for 'yarning' might disturb the choleric old gentleman into an emphatic denial of the truth of some story told over the after-dinner pipe, and so, by adumbration, damage my own reputation for veracity—the latter being believed by my uncle to be unimpeachable.

'Why run the risk ?' you will say. Well, Tom was simply the finest fly-fisherman I ever met, either for trout or salmon ; and on my previous visits to the river running through the estate I could get but scanty sport. Blanchard, however, knew the name of every fly, and could sit by the river and manufacture its imitation, an accomplishment often spoken of, but seldom found ; and if he had slept and lived night and day with trout, I doubt if he could have known more of their habits.

I was a fair fisherman myself ; and this, coupled with the facts that the river was full of fish and that I couldn't catch them, determined me to invite Tom to accompany me on my next quest. My own favourite pastime was shooting, and at this (though he boasted enough, goodness knows !) Tom was but a poor hand ; in fact, his genius certainly lay with the rod and mine with the gun.

In due time we arrived at our destination, and were cordially received by my uncle and cousins (two pretty girls then : Tom and I married them between us thirty years ago) ; and, after a good night's rest, were on the river betimes the next morning. It was one of those beautiful, late summer days of early Sep-

tember, which, with a less vertical sun and occasional soft breeze, make our English landscape, and the neighbourhood of water especially, so much more enjoyable than is the case in the blistering hours of midsummer. Our happy fishing-ground presented the characteristics peculiar to every good trout stream: it was clear and moderately rapid; 'here and there a lusty trout, and here and there a grayling.' In its current grew the plantain and water-thyme, the crowfoot and mare's-tail, and all the other fern-like productions of the chalk stratum; by its margin the yellow water-lily and water-ranunculus, with here and there the forget-me-not and water-cress. At intervals the reeds, in long borders, hid the existence of the maturing *pseudimagos* and spinners of the beautiful *ephemera* family of flies; and as the time wore on to the meridian these came forth—the olive duns with their varied shades, and the beautiful, small, red spinners, lifting their gauzy wings to the breeze, and presently falling on the water, to be engulfed in the cavern of some waiting trout's mouth—for, behold! by half-past eleven the rise was on.

I would fain dilate on the great doings of myself and friend amongst the trout during the next few days, but my present object is to relate an incident which arose out of our visit; or, to be more precise, arose out of Tom's propensity for story-telling and my uncle's decided talent for returning a Roland for an Oliver. The foregoing must, therefore, be considered as simply introductory.

It was the last night of our stay, and we three—the Squire, Tom, and I—sat in the cosy sanctum of my uncle, where guns, rods, and books, cases of fish and birds, pipes galore, and a well-filled chiffonier, alike found an abiding-place, when my eye fell, in the intervals of conversation, on a handsome pike, of some dozen pounds, which was encased and bracketed over the mantelpiece. It was splendidly stuffed, and I rose to get a close view.

'Where did you get this stuffed so well?' I asked, knowing that there are very few taxidermists who can properly set a fish up.

My uncle replied to the question, giving a name which I forget now, and adding, 'That fish was caught close to the Lamb Bridge, where you fished to-day. And what do you suppose we found inside it, above all things in the world?' he queried, with a twinkle in his eye which seemed to say, 'Tell me if you can.'

'A trout? No? Rat, moorhen, swallow?' &c. &c., going

through the whole list of probable prey, aided most efficiently by Tom. To each and all we had the answer 'No.'

'Give it up, uncle. Perhaps nothing at all,' said I.

'An otter, my boy! Yes,' he continued, seeing our widened optics, 'a young otter, no larger than a rat!'

'Prodigious!' exclaimed Tom, with a slight involuntary intonation of disbelief.

'Eh!' sharply questioned my uncle; 'don't you believe it, Sir?'

'Most certainly I do, Sir; for I knew of even stranger contents of a large pike I caught myself in Ireland, near Killarney.'

'Pray tell us the story, Sir,' said my uncle, stiffly; and, notwithstanding my warning look into Tom's eyes, he began with great gravity.

'The fish was known to be in a private lake at —, the property of Lord —, and its size was variously estimated at from 60 to 150 pounds in weight. I heard of the leviathan, and begged permission to try to catch him with rod and line. This was granted, but both his lordship and his lordship's keeper laughed at me—as an idiot, presumably. However, to make a long story a very simple one, by dint of strong tackle and a large bait I hooked, and, aided by the keeper, landed him. His weight was just over 37 pounds; and a remarkably handsome fish he was. But what jaws —'

'And what was inside him?' interrupted the Squire, anxious to arrive at the pith of the story at once.

Tom answered slowly and impressively, '*A sow and pigs, Sir!*'

I looked round sharply, and there sat the Squire, wide-mouthed and open-eyed, looking the blankest of astonishment, but hardly for a moment; and then he started to his feet.

'Damme, Sir!' he actually shouted, 'do you expect me to believe that infernal —?' But he stopped. Good breeding stepped in. 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Blanchard, but did you say "a sow and pigs?"'

'I did, Sir, most assuredly.'

'Then, Sir,' said my uncle, his colour rising again, 'you disbelieved my saying that we found an otter in the stomach of yon pike, and are genteelly telling me I am a liar, by reciting this more than impossible story; and I—I—I don't like it, Sir!' This latter with emphasis.

'Indeed you are mistaken,' said Tom, meekly, with a sly look in his eyes which made me wonder what was coming next.

"Allow me to explain. The "sow and pigs" were simply a *guinea-sow in pig*. The keeper had thrown the little creature in the water the day before, it having died from some cause or other, d'y'e sec!"

The Squire didn't quite know whether still to be angry or not, but I burst into a hearty laugh, and this set him going, and he kept it up till his sides shook again. After this *contretemps* the remainder of the evening was spent in a very amicable manner, and the pike incident appeared quite forgotten.

The next morning at breakfast the Squire said, in the blandest possible way,—

'By-the-by, Mr. B——, you shoot, do you not?'

'Oh, yes!' replied Tom, with eagerness. 'I had a deal of shooting last year, especially woodcock, in Scotland.'

I opened my eyes with wonder at this utterance. However, I said nothing, but thought the more.

'You and Jack (meaning me) must run down, and we'll try and find you some woodcock in November,' added the Squire. 'Mind, you promise.'

'Most heartily,' was the reply; and soon after the dogcart was brought round and, with hearty good wishes, we were speeding towards the railway station.

'What on earth did you tell that unmitigated—— well, you know what?' I asked, when we were comfortably seated in the train and whirling Windsorwards.

'Don't bother! one must say something.'

'Did you *ever* kill a woodcock, now, candidly and honestly?'

'Well, as you ask for information, candidly and honestly, no,' was Tom's reply.

* * * * *

November came, and with it all the climatic horrors that make it famous:

No sun, no moon;
No morn, no noon;
No dawn, no dusk, no proper time of day.
* * *
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member;
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees;
No flowers, no fruit, no birds—
November!

So sings Tom Hood. But, begging his pardon, there *were* birds; for, ere the first week had passed, up came a letter from the

Squire, inviting Mr. B—— and myself down for a bit of rabbit and woodcock shooting. Before rushing off to Tom with the news I pondered. Rabbits there were enough and to spare, but *woodcock* I had never heard talk about—on that estate at least. However, down we went as before, and met with the usual cordial welcome.

Still I was puzzled, and after dinner, missing the Squire, I strolled towards the keeper's cottage. 'Mayhap,' I thought, 'I can unravel the mystery of the plenteous woodcock'—of which species of bird I was certain I had never seen one hereabouts in all my wanderings. As I neared old Carter's house there was a light to be seen in the outhouse, and, approaching very quietly, I could see, through the chink of the door, Carter, with two baskets before him. From one he was taking birds of some kind, one by one, and placing them in the other. By his side stood the Squire. Not suspecting I was interrupting a *tête-à-tête* I hastily walked in, and, had a select assortment of thunderbolts fallen amidst us they could not have started more violently, or looked more conscious of guilt.

'Why, you've got a lot of pigeons! Are you going in for pigeon-shooting?' I asked, in great surprise.

'Why, no, Mr. Jack,' began Carter, when my uncle stopped him by saying, 'We'd better let *him* into the secret, Carter.' The Squire was determined to be revenged for the pike yarn of the preceding September, and some brown pigeons had been procured—that is, brown enough for the purpose of manufacturing them into woodcock.

'How about the bill? A pigeon's bill is not like a woodcock's,' I suggested.

Old Carter winked his eye, and drew from his pocket a handful of turkey quills, cut to the length of a 'cock's' beak, or rather bill, and so split as not to affect the bird's breathing; and drawing from the basket a live pigeon proceeded to 'fix' him. When the quill was adjusted the bird might well be taken by a novice for a woodcock, and the rapid flight of the pigeon might well, also, prevent an indifferent shot like Blanchard hitting it, or discerning the difference. Old Carter was to conceal a basket of these birds at each of the three different beats, to be near to Tom, with a pocket full throughout the day.

The morning was dull and foggy, and just suitable for the diabolical plan the old Squire had in view. No sooner had he commenced beating than 'Mark cock!' was heard, and bang



Yes it is, I see its back!

Wm. Swank

went Tom's gun ; but the velocity of the bird's flight stupefied him.

'Do the infernal long bills always fly like that?' he inquired, *sotto voce*, of me.

'Oh, they're pretty swift!' I replied.

'By Jove, they are like rockets!' was his observation.

Right on till evening, when sport with the bunnies failed, up went a 'cock,' and 'Mark cock!' was heard quite a score and a half of times.

'I thought you were a capital shot, Jack,' Tom once said to me; 'and yet you don't kill.'

I knew the reason why, however.

The night was drawing close, and the last rays of daylight beginning to look uncommonly grey, when the Squire, who had not been with us, strolled up.

'What sport, gentlemen?' was his cheery question.

'Capital with the bunnies,' said Tom; 'but though we've flushed a score or more of "cock" we can neither of us kill.'

'Let me see: *you* have been at it before, Mr. Blanchard?'

'Oh, of course!' he returned, nonchalantly; 'dozens of times!'

'Jack!' said Tom, suddenly, just as we were preparing to leave for home, 'do you see that "cock" in the birch yonder? It's a pot shot; but, never mind, here goes.'

'It ain't a woodcock,' I said.

'Yes, it is; I see its beak;' and bang went the gun, and down went the "cock." Off scampered old Carter, and returned bringing the bird with a grin all over his face.

'You've got one at last, then,' said the Squire.

'Yes,' returned Tom, with lofty intonation; and, taking the bird from the keeper, he thrust it into the game-bag. Thence home, and to dinner.

* * * * *

'By the way, Mr. Blanchard, you fairly caught me a month or two since about a sow and pigs found in a pike, didn't you?' said the Squire, an hour or two later on, in the smoking-room.

'Ha! ha! ha!' roared Tom at the bare remembrance.

The Squire smiled significantly, and rang the bell. When the servant appeared he said, 'John, bring in Mr. Blanchard's woodcock that he shot to-day. There is only one bird: that is the one.' Straightway it was brought in on a tray. 'Will you look closely at it, Mr. Blanchard?'

Tom took it up by the bill, and the bird dropped from it. He stared ; suddenly a light broke in upon him.

'A pigeon, by Jingo!!!'

'Tit for tat,' quietly remarked the Squire, with the benevolence of a Peabody detected in a good action shining on his rubicund countenance.

THE ROPSLEY RUN.

A TALE OF WILL GOODALL.

By 'OLD CHARLEY.'



WAS Thursday morn, so the meet lay wide,
 Full twenty miles on the Ropsley side—
 I'm speaking now of the bygone day
 When 'Will-o'-the-Hill' held all the sway ;
 Well, all the sway that he cared to hold
 Beneath the banner of Todenei Bold.
 The Melton men were but six all told,
 For most fared forth to the country cold
 Where scent is catching and foxes few,
 And 'blank' on 'blank' makes your nose look blue.
 So we felt taller by several feet
 Because we had miss'd the Wymeswold meet ;
 We knew, if coverts were short of fur,
 Will Goodall ne'er was known to demur.
 'Yo-oicks,' he'd cry, and the pack would go,
 While waves of scarlet would swiftly flow.
 For many a time in old Belvoir's hall
 The jest went round at the even-fall,
 Of raspers ending at Belvoir Hill
 With never a fox but the biped Will,
 And sportsmen old shook their sides with mirth
 At Goodall's phiz when he 'ran to earth.'
 We'd mounts from Grantham, and made good play
 With foxes three out the Humby way,
 Enough the gamest of steeds to tire
 Before we steered for the lofty spire,
 The proud proud boast of old Grantham town :
 Ten miles away when the sun went down,
 And never a horse but was white with foam
 When Goodall gave us a lead for home.
 The night closed in on the Ropsley Rice,
 Our steeds were tired ; more than once or twice
 It seemed as if we should end the day

By taking samples of Lincoln clay.
Says Will, 'I wish the moon would rise.'
'Cheer up,' cries Jem, as a light he spies.
Then Jem the whip, and the huntsman Will,
Spurred up the slope of the neighb'ring hill,
A friendly guide from the light to gain,
Through murky darkness, and slush, and rain.
They'd had fresh mounts not three hours ago,
But *we* toiled on with a puff and blow.
They neared the lights ('twas a baker's cart),
When Muffins turned with a tim'rous start,
And mem'ries fell through his mind ran fast,
Of 'Beau Brocades' of a day long past.
The gibbet-post was quite close at hand,
Where hung the last of the robber band ;
So Muffins spared not his pliant thong,
The foes were near and the way was long.
On speeds the baker, on speed the pair,
With wild delight, for the sport is rare.
At Grantham town he at last took ground,
And men still young in the shires are found
Who'll vouch the truth of the famous fun,
Of the Ropsley day and the 'Baker's Run.'

DAN SEFFERT'S EXPERIENCES.

By 'H. H.'

MANY years ago it was my luck to pass some few days in the company of Dan Seffert, the celebrated riding-master and steeplechase-jockey, when courses were not the cut-and-dried affairs they are at the present time ; and it strikes me that some of his old-world stories will find as much favour with readers of *Fores's* quarterly as did those of Dick Christian when collected by the Druid ; especially as I am able to supplement them by an account of Dan's celebrated Grimaldi-and-Moonraker Match at Harrow, from the pen of the late Hon. Robert Grimston, who, knowing I took an interest in such matters, sent me an account of this race, of which he was not only an eye-witness, but in which he actually rode a good part of the distance with the competitors. It will be noticed that Mr. Grimston and Dan Seffert viewed this affair in a different light : Dan thought he should have won, whilst Mr. Grimston insisted that Grimaldi always held him safe.

Having thus introduced my subject, I will let the veteran speak for himself:—

‘You want my opinion about riding? Well, you shall have it; and to commence with I will tell you the reason so many horses are difficult to mount. The cause is this: when men put their left foot in the stirrup they stick the toe of their boot against the colt’s ribs; of course he does not like this, shifts to get away from it, and that prevents the rider being able to mount. This experience soon becomes fixed in his mind, and he will never stand as he should do afterwards. Bad habits are soon acquired, and not easily forgotten. The knee of the rider should press against the saddle-flap, when the boot cannot touch the horse’s ribs. When a man is taught to ride properly all these little niceties are instilled into his mind, and he never forgets them. Bless you! I could ride anyhow, and have before now jumped a fence with my face to the horse’s tail. It’s not so difficult as it looks. This is how it came about: We were larking home from hunting, a lot of us together, when Beecher offered to bet that he would do what no other man in England could do, and, turning his face to his horse’s tail, he rode him over a stile in that position. I said, “Well, if you can do what no other man can do, no man shall do what I dare not try;” and, turning round on my saddle, I also rode with my face to the horse’s tail.

‘Billy Bean was with us, but he had gone into the road before that. I once had a schooling or pounding match with him for a new hat, and John Elmore was umpire. We were both on such rare jumpers that neither of us could stop the other or get him down; so I rode my horse, who was a very steady, clever one, across a plank over a river, and jumped a stile at the far end at a standing leap, which he only just touched with his hind legs through slipping a little as he took off. I dared not touch him, but just left it all to his honour, and he picked his way across as carefully as possible. What a ducking I should have got if we had slipped off! Bill Bean said it was not a fair hunting-fence, and would not come, so Elmore decided he had lost the hat; but if any of his descendants are alive now I can assure them that to this day the bet of the hat has never been discharged. They always chaffed me about the school-tricks, and said that this was one of them; but we could make horses handy.

‘Another time I did not have the laugh all on my side. Paddy Jackson, of the Hippodrome, was a great man for larking. One day, returning from hunting, he jumped a gate out of a

Pounded



road, which his horse hit hard. Being on a first-rate timber-jumper, I said, "I'll show you the way to jump gates as it should be done," and went at it; but my horse smashed it altogether, and rolled right over with me. How he laughed about my showing him the way to jump gates, to be sure! We certainly went out more to ride than for the sake of hunting, and thought more about cutting each other down than looking after the work of hounds. I never cared to see the fox killed, and if I viewed him when he was beaten I would not halloo, but just let the huntsman find out for himself where he was, as it was his business to kill him, not mine. Once I thought I had saved one like this; but a stupid old woman told on him, and they ran him to ground and dug him out and killed him just afterwards, which I thought a great shame. You hear a great deal of nonsense about teaching horses to jump. They all jump naturally, but you can improve their natural powers if, by causing them to go in a collected form; that is, getting them well balanced and set in their haunches. When horses are made to go in this form they seldom fall so as to roll over, even if they make a mistake. Another great secret is never to hurry them in their education, and whatever you do keep the whip away from them. Very few really understand the art of teaching young horses to fence. The best man I ever saw was George Darby of Rugby (now of Hillmorton). I never cared for what people call such very clever horses, who only just clear their fences and no more. I like the big jumpers that go with a will out of one field into the other, and then, if there is a larger ditch than common, they are pretty well sure to clear it.

'One Sunday I was dining with a friend quite early—one o'clock dinner; lunch you'd call it now—when he proposed that we should ride to Brighton. The Brighton Road was much infested with turnpike-gates in those days, and we paid one which cleared the next, but forgot to take tickets. We told the toll-keeper we had paid, but he locked the gate and refused to let us through. I said to my friend, "Will you follow me if I ride over?" "Yes," was the answer. I took my little mare back about fifty yards, put her at it and cleared it, so did my friend, to the chagrin of the pikeman.

Horses have an immense deal of sense. I was riding the celebrated Moonraker a gallop once where he used to go three times round the track to make up four miles. We had not gone much more than a hundred yards when the bit broke

and parted in his mouth, and I was left on him with the reins dangling from his headstall to my hands, entirely at his mercy. After going round the usual three times he stopped of his own accord and allowed me to dismount, which I think is a plain proof of what a horse will do for you if you place confidence in him. He was a very hard puller, but that made no difference. Mr. Parker, I believe, bought him out of a coach at Birmingham, and gave 15*l.* for him, which I should think was certainly all he looked to be worth with such sprung sinews. He hunted him, and he went so well in some runs that he ran him in a small race at Harrow or Finchley, and after that Mr. Elmore and Mr. Joseph Anderson gave two hundred guineas for him ; but I fancy Mr. Anderson did not like the look of his legs and got out of his share, so that Mr. Elmore had him all to himself. Perhaps you would like to know the end of the poor old fellow ? One day I met a man leading him and asked, "Where are you going to take poor old Moonraker ? Not to be killed ?" "Yes," was the answer, "without you like to have him ; if so, I will give him to you." So I had him, and gave him to Dockery, the trainer, to ride about on the Downs, where the old crack carried him for a couple of years, when he gave him away to a farmer to do light harrow work. It so happened that the hounds came across the field where he was harrowing, when the old horse ran away, jumped, or, rather, attempted to jump a big fence, fell with the harrow on the top of him, and was so much hurt that they killed him to put him out of his pain. My riding of Moonraker made a great deal of talk and sensation, and many people said that Grimaldi ought to have won at St. Albans had he been differently ridden ; but I say now that I was on the best horse, and nothing could have been better handled than Grimaldi by Mr. Mostyn, now Lord Vaux. True, I saved a little ground by jumping that big fence where the others went round ; but the twenty-six pounds I carried round my waist was a hindrance both to the horse and me, and nearly caused me to fall at the sensation jump at last. I should have won the match at Harrow had it not been for the boys, who, suddenly appearing on the other side of the fence, made my horse swerve into deep, boggy ground. I found the Squire who rode Grimaldi and had made running riding up and down a big bullfinch to find a place to get out, I jumped two fences to get round it when this happened, and he got out and gained such a start that he beat me.'

Here we will interrupt the veteran to give Mr. Grimston's account of the same affair.

'Moonraker was a lucky horse to win the St. Alban's Steeplechase in 1832. It was the general opinion that Mr. Mostyn did not come quick enough with Grimaldi, who was only beaten by a neck. Mr. Mostyn himself complained that he was crossed in the last field by some of the spectators on horseback. So convinced was Mr. Osbaldeston of the superiority of Grimaldi, that the same evening he gave John Elmore 50*l.* to make a match for 500*l.* a-side, 11 st. 7 lbs. each, four miles over the Harrow country, to come off on the Tuesday following. Captain Evans, the owner of Grimaldi, made some objection to his horse running, but that difficulty was got over by Mr. Osbaldeston buying the horse. Slight odds were at once laid upon Moonraker, the public being carried away by his great reputation, he having won four steeplechases without having suffered a defeat. In point of fact there was no comparison between the two horses: Moonraker was a mean-looking bay, under 15 h. 3 in., but with great propelling powers; he galloped well, and he was an extraordinary jumper, but hot and impetuous. On the other hand, Grimaldi was a snaffle-bridle hunter, and as magnificent an animal as ever you set eyes upon, up to great weight, and clean thoroughbred. When Grimaldi was afterwards tried upon Wormwood Scrubbs with Glenartney, who had run second for the Derby five years before, he won by three lengths. The match excited intense interest, and crowds from London went down Harrow way. The riders weighed at John Elmore's farm at Uxendon, and Seffert had to carry 16 lbs. dead weight. The Squire, as usual, was full of his chaff, and said to Seffert, "I'll teach you London riding-masters how to ride!" The starting-point was where the Sudbury Station of the London and North-Western now stands, and the early part of the line was very much the same as the present railway, leaving Uxendon Farm and Woodcock Hill to the right, then, keeping on the right-hand side of the Harrow Weald road, to a field at the foot of Stanmore Hill, in which the winning flags were placed. The ground was excessively deep, but, as far as fences were concerned, it was a very light line, and for the last mile the spectators had made gaps in every fence. The Renton brook had to be crossed, but it had a nice fence on the taking-off side, and, as the Squire observed, it was "a place that any cat could jump over."

‘Mr. Osbaldeston intended to have made a waiting-race ; but, before half the distance had been gone over, finding that he had galloped Moonraker to death, he took the lead, and, increasing his advantage at every stride, cantering in an easy winner by a whole field. Moonraker was terribly distressed, and it was as much as Seffert could do to prevent him from falling at the gap into the last field.’

This is Mr. Grimston’s version, sent me a year or two before his death ; and in a letter which accompanied it he said, ‘ I rode a good part of the distance with them towards the finish.’ Now I will resume Seffert’s story.

‘ I never rode Grimaldi myself but once, and that was at Aylesbury in the light-weight steeplechase, when I got him second to Beecher on Vivian. Two days before he had run unplaced, with Mason on him, to Saladin, who was ridden by Powell. He was a shy water-jumper, and I surprised them all by getting him over the brook ; but I went where some bushes overhung the water. Old Billy Bean said afterwards, “ He knew very well how it was the old horse carried me over : it was just because he knew I never could bear water unless there was some brandy in it, and that was why he would not put me in.” My own mare, Parasol, did the biggest jump with me at water, I believe, I ever went at. In a steeplechase in Essex she jumped the river Lea with me—the main stream. I did not know what it was till I was over. Mr. — saw her do it, so it could not be doubted ; he told me there must have been five or six-and-twenty feet of water. I think she was one of the best, if not the very best, animal I ever crossed. I sold her to Henry Oldaker for 28*l.*, and they said I cheated him, but it was no such thing. It was before the cub-hunting when I sold her, and after a time he brought her back and said no man could ride her with hounds. I admit she was difficult, and wanted a man on her ; but I trained her for steeplechasing, and did very well indeed by her, as I also did by Birthday, that I sold to Jem Mason for 80*l.* ; but he brought him back the next day and said he could not keep such a kangaroo brute. However, so good was he that people were afraid to enter where they knew he was going to run. But most of my racing experiences have been written about, so I will not trouble you with them. You ask, “ Have I not met with some curious characters in my time ? ” Indeed, I have ; none more so, perhaps, than the celebrated Dr. Wardrop. He was a character, and often would have a whole room full of

patients, and take no notice of them until he felt inclined to do so. I have known it happen when I called, and asked, "Is the Doctor at home?" that the old crone who answered the door would say, "Aye, well, I suppose he'll be at hame to you!" and I would find him sitting in his study, perhaps writing a work, and taking no notice of the bell which kept tinkling. He would then talk to me about horses a long time, and suddenly jump up, take me by the shoulders, and put me right out of the door, never waiting to finish a sentence himself, or hear me do so either. Once he attended me, and I went to ask him what I had to pay when he said, "Aye, mon, if ye were a rich deevil like——or——I'd just make ye out a lang bill; but as ye're a puir soul like meself, that has to work for ye're leevings, we'll cray quits." I thanked him, and was going away, when he cried out, "Here, Seffert! I want a pony, and ye must look me out one. He must be a thick one, d'ye see? because I'm a lang, tall man; and if he does not spread my legs I'll be walking and riding at the same time." I told him I would look out one, and was starting again when he called out, "Seffert! if he's broken-winded it'll be no matter, because if he runs away he won't run so far with me, d'ye see? And, Seffert, if he's blind I don't care; it's no matter, because then he won't shy with me, d'ye see?" For all that he was a horseman, but a very eccentric character; and he would not have his windows cleaned, because he said the Ladies —— opposite would be looking at him so. Once I took him a nice little horse, just his style, and he would not ride him, "because," he said, "they would be looking out at him. At length I persuaded him to mount, but when he did so something made the horse move, and he said, "Take him away! take him away! I can't ride to-day!"

Another curious character, I remember, was Squire Meagher, who had the harriers in Surrey; he could not bear any dealers from London to come out with him, and once took the hounds home because he thought I had over-ridden them. A parson came out that he did not like, and instead of cheering the hounds in the usual way, he commenced, "Hoick, Devil Dodger! eleu Nick Baffler!" meaning the parson all the time, of course. But I did not see that he took the hint and went home, although he must have thought that Mr. Meagher named his hounds rather curiously.

'I did some curious things myself when a boy. I used sometimes to hire a chimney-sweep's pony that I could ride as I liked, and not in riding-school form, as my father always made us

do; and once my brother and I rode him into the Park, "double!" just at the most fashionable time of the day, when the crowd was thickest, with all our old clothes on. What a laugh there was, to be sure! but we did not take it that we were the cause of all the fun, and thought ourselves as grand as any one there! But if I went on to tell you all my youthful scrapes of that kind I should tire your patience out, so we had better stop.'

I, however, did not think it was the final stop it proved to be, as I looked forward to many more chats with old Seffert; but, alas! I never saw him again.

A MERRY MILL.

By 'FUSBOS.'



HE mention of the great battle at Farnborough between Tom Sayers and Heenan, or, as the latter was more generally called by his admirers, 'The Benicia Boy,' nearly thirty years ago, will no doubt recall to the memories of many of the readers of *Fores's Notes and Sketches*, not only the extraordinary excitement it caused all over England at the time, but also the fillip it gave to the then somewhat drooping fortunes of the Prize Ring. How subscription lists for the benefit of our own champion were opened in both Houses of Parliament, headed by the Premier, the sport-loving Lord Palmerston; to say nothing of others promoted on the Stock Exchange and elsewhere, and subscribed to by 'all sorts and conditions of men,' are matters of history. The gallant Tom Sayers was the hero of the hour, and was petted and made much of wherever he showed himself. Ladies vied with one another in possessing his photograph; the rising generation studied the noble art of self-defence alternately with the Latin Grammar; a facetious farce having reference to the fight was performed with enormous success at the Olympic Theatre; in fact, never was the P. R. in such good odour with society in general as at the period we have named.

Amongst the many young men of the period who were bitten by the prevailing fashion was a young gentleman named Poppet—Percy Poppet. Percy was an orphan, his father and mother having both died in India when he was a boy at school, and was, at the time we speak of, by way of reading for the Bar. We mention Percy's choice of a profession thus disparagingly from

a knowledge of the fact that, seriously speaking, that gentleman had about as much intention of damaging his constitution by hard work of any sort as a guinea-pig. But, as he himself would cheerily remark to his friends, 'It's handy, don't you know, when any old fogey says to me, "Well, Percy, what are you doing with yourself?" to be able to shut him up with: "Me? Oh, I'm reading for the Bar." Sounds quiet and respectable, don't you know,' he would add with a grin. Perhaps, under the circumstances, it was not very extraordinary that our friend should prefer the *rôle* of a man of pleasure, for it is not too much to say that, for a young man commencing life, he was uncommonly well endowed with worldly goods.

Besides his seven or eight hundred a-year left him by his father, he was the recipient of a handsome allowance from two old maiden aunts, sisters of his father, to whom he was the acknowledged heir, and who lived all alone at a charming old place called Primleigh Park, in Snoremboremshire, whither, when tired of London racket, Percy would retire to 'repair damages,' as he facetiously called it, and to be made much of by the Misses Poppet, his aunts. What a fuss the two dear old ladies (Miss Georgina and Miss Elizabeth) made of their graceless nephew, to be sure, when he condescended to pay them a visit! Bless their innocent old hearts! they laboured steadily under the impression that dear Percy was undermining his constitution with hard reading, and if it had not been that they had visions of their *protégé* being eventually seated on the woolsack, they would have done their best to persuade him to give up London altogether, and for the future take up his abode permanently with them at Primleigh Park.

We remarked, in introducing our hero, that, like many other young men of the day, he was considerably bitten by the prevailing mania for fisticuffs. But, in reality, we were not speaking half strongly enough. Master Percy, always an adept with the gloves at Cambridge, had, since the great fight at Farnborough, not only developed a greater affection than ever for donning the mittens on all possible occasions with his friends, both amateur and professional, but had blossomed, soon after his arrival in town, into a regular supporter of the P. R. Not a fight did he miss if he could help it, and at the different sporting drums there was very soon no more familiar figure than that of Mr. Percy Poppet.

If the two old maiden aunts could have only seen their embryo Lord Chancellor disporting himself in the different bar-

parlours he was so fond of frequenting, what little hair they possessed—nay, their very fronts—would have stood up on end.

Now, there was one particular fighting crib that our young friend favoured more than any other, and this was the 'Rising Sun' in St. Martin's Lane, kept by an ex-pugilist, of burly exterior, named Joseph Dabbs, or Jolly Joe Dabbs as he was pleased to call himself, when advertising his hostelry in the *Lanc* or his booth at Epsom or Hampton Races in the columns of *Bell's Life in London*. Joe was an immense card with the Corinthians generally, and with Percy in particular, and it was odd indeed if the latter did not look in at the Rising Sun some time in the course of the night when in London.

Behold him then, with a large cigar in his mouth, on a certain Saturday evening in September, having dined comfortably at his club, and on the best possible terms with himself, bound for the Jolly one's abode in St. Martin's Lane.

'Old 'un in?' inquires he of the broken-nosed potboy as he elbows his way with some difficulty through the inconveniently crowded bar, and makes for the little parlour at the end with the air of an *habitué*.

'Come back not arf-an-'our ago; you'll find him in there, Squire,' is the reply.

Sure enough, seated in his own little sanctum, solacing himself with a chop and a mealy potato, is the jovial proprietor of the Rising Sun, all alone for a wonder, the hour being rather early for his aristocratic visitors.

'Wot! Muster Poppet!' exclaimed Mr. Dabbs, laying down his knife and fork, and holding out an enormous hand for his patron to shake. 'Wot! Muster Poppet! The werry identical gent as I wanted to see! Says I to the Missis not arf-an-hour ago, says I, "I don't believe as the young Squire 'll leave the grouse arter all, to come up for the mill." "Don't you believe it?" says she; "after finding arf the battle money," she says, "and so fond of it as he is too! He won't miss it," she says, "never fear."'

'Well, I only got back from Scotland last night, Joe,' replied Percy, 'or I should have been here before, you may depend. And now, open a bottle of champagne, and give me the office. Billy in the bar there told me you had only just come off a journey, so I s'pose you've fixed time and place—eh?'

'That's just wot I've been and done only this werry day,' replied Joe. 'Wait arf a minute, and I'll tell you all the noos,'

added he, with a wink to suggest silence, as the broken-nosed potboy made his appearance with the champagne.

That worthy having taken his departure, after opening the bottle and placing glasses with inconceivable rapidity ; Joe Dabbs once more resumed the conversation.

‘With regard to the fight itself,’ said he, ‘that’s fixed for Toosday ; special to start from Euston Square Station at six o’clock a.m. sharp. The spot where we ’ope to bring the affair off, with credit to ’all concerned, I chose myself only to-day, after nearly a week’s hunting about one way or another. And sech a spot, Muster Poppet ! I don’t werily believe as a mill was ever brought off on sech a spot before, blame me if I do ! And so you’ll say yourself when you see it, sir. It’s the pictereskest place I ever did set my blessed eyes on, and that’s the truth ; it’s as level as a billiard-table, too ; and as for the turf, it’s that springy you might halmost fancy you was treading on hingy-rubber.’ And having thus delivered himself, Mr. Dabbs drained his tumbler of champagne with the air of a man thoroughly well-pleased with himself.

‘And whereabouts is this field, or whatever it is, where you are going to bring off the fight ?’ inquired Percy, as he lit a fresh cigar.

‘Well, it’s sitivated,’ replied the Rising Sun proprietor, ‘in Snoremboremshire, honly about a hour and a arf from town, and close alongside the line. But, Muster Poppet, don’t, hif you please, talk of this ’ere ’eavenly spot as I’ve fixed on, as a field—a common, dirty, uneven, grass field, to be ’ired from one of them greedy farmers. No, no ; please don’t ’urt my feelings like that, sir,’ murmured Joe, deprecatingly.

‘Well, if it isn’t a field, what on earth is it ? Out with it, man !’ rejoined Percy.

‘Wot should you say, guvnor,’ rejoined Mr. Dabbs, tapping the side of his nose with a huge forefinger, and putting on a look of infinite cunning ; ‘wot should you say to a Park—a princely park—not a nobleman’s park, nor yet a genelman’s park, but a park belonging to two dear old ladies, wot’ll be in bed and asleep, bless their hinnercent old ’arts ! all the while the mill’s a-goin’ on, and who’d be too frightened to say a word even if they did wake up and see wot was a-takin’ place in front of their drawing-room winders ? Blow me !’ exclaimed the delighted Mr. Dabbs, ‘if it hain’t the werry cleverest thing as I ever done, and I ought to be made a barrernit for it ; dash my buttons if I didn’t.’

‘Pon my soul, Joe, you’re a great man,’ remarked Percy,

approvingly, 'a very great man. By the way, what's the name of this earthly paradise? I know part of Snoremboremshire very well.'

'The name of the place, Muster Poppet,' said Mr. Dabbs, pulling out from an inside pocket a greasy pocket-book of gigantic dimensions, and referring to a dirty piece of paper produced therefrom, 'the name of this lovely park, sir, is Primrose—no, that hain't it—Primleigh, that's it! How they makes a hell, and a he, and a hi, and a gee, and a haitch, spell Lee, I don't know; that's their business. I honly know that's how they pernounces and spells it. As for the two dear old ladies as owns it, wot their blessed names is I didn't inquire, so I don't know. But Lor' bless me, Muster Poppet! you look knocked out o' time like! Wot's the matter, guvnor? Speak out!'

'Just this, Joe,' groaned his youthful patron, 'you've been and gone and done it with a vengeance this time, as far as I am concerned, at least. Primleigh Park belongs to my aunts, the two Miss Poppets; I am their heir, and if they were to find out I had anything to do with bringing off a prize-fight in their park, why, they'd cut me off with a shilling. Oh, Joseph Dabbs, Joseph Dabbs, this is indeed a floorer!'

CHAPTER II.

'WHY, my goodness gracious me! I do declare here's Percy!' exclaimed Miss Georgina Poppet to her sister Miss Elizabeth, as, looking out of the drawing-room window on the afternoon of the Monday following Percy's interview with the pugilistic proprietor of the *Rising Sun*, described in the preceding chapter, she spied that erratic young gentleman wending his way on foot towards the house, having evidently just arrived by the mid-day express from town.

'Why, dear me! so there is!' said Miss Elizabeth, rising from her chair and hastening to the window. 'Poor, dear boy! been reading too hard again, as usual, and come down here for a little peace and quiet. I do hope,' went on the warm-hearted old lady, 'that he is going to stay with us some time, and has not come on one of those "here to-day and gone to-morrow" visits he usually favours us with. A long rest, I feel certain, would do him a world of good. Ring the bell, Georgina, and we'll tell Magnum to send a cart for his luggage at once.'

Two more minutes, and the heir to Primleigh Park was in the drawing-room submitting gracefully to being made much of by

his affectionate aunts, who, needless to say, spoiled the reprobate terribly.'

'If you only knew the real object of my unexpected visit, you dear old things,' thought Percy to himself, with a quiet chuckle, 'it strikes me forcibly you wouldn't make quite so much fuss over your affectionate nephew as you are doing at the present moment.' In which surmise we think it highly probable that he was right.

In the course of half-an-hour or so Mr. Magnum the butler—a perfect picture of an old family servant—came puffing in to say that the luggage belonging to Mr. Percy had arrived, and to demand the keys of the same, in order that the contents might be unpacked.

'Here they are,' said our hero, handing them over to the butler. 'Oh, and by the way, Magnum, I think I'll just come up with you to my room now. A horrid thought has just this moment occurred to me that some law-books I intended bringing down with me to prevent my getting *quite* rusty (the humbug!) may have been left behind, for I packed my things in a terrible hurry. If it is as I think, I must write for them by this evening's post. So come along, Magnum.'

'Dear, studious boy!' murmured Miss Elizabeth, as he left the room; 'he will do something to make us proud of our nephew yet before we die. What say you, Georgina?'

'I, too, feel positively certain he will, the dear, persevering fellow!' replied Miss Georgina.

We will now leave the old aunts to discuss their nephew's good qualities, and, ascending to what were known in the house as Mr. Percy's rooms, listen to a little conversation that is now going on between that young gentleman and the butler, the worthy Mr. Magnum, with whom, needless to say, he was on the very best of terms.

The first thing Mr. Percy did on entering his sitting-room was to throw himself on to the sofa; his next was to light a cigar. He then shouted to the butler, who was in the adjoining bedroom unpacking sundry portmanteaus, and bidding him pour him out a glass of brown sherry from a decanter of the same which that worthy man had had the foresight to bring up with him, requested him to fill another glass for himself, to take a chair, and to listen whilst he spoke to him concerning a matter of the deepest importance.

'Magnum,' he began, 'have you ever seen a prize-fight?'

'Lor' bless me, Mr. Percy! what a question to ask! No, sir,

I never did,' replied the astonished butler, wondering what was coming next.

'Would you like to see one, Magnum?'

'Ah, now,' replied Magnum, 'that's touching me on a tender pint, Mr. Percy, that is. I don't mind confessing to you, Mr. Percy, that for years past I've had a sort of feeling that I should like to see a real, good fight before I died, and the great affair between Tom Sayers and Heenan naturally made me more h anxious than ever. Of course I've read about 'em constant in *Bell's Life*, and beautiful reading they har. Mrs. Mulberry, the housekeeper, she says that for pleasant reading of a Sunday afternoon there's nothing like a good murder; but I don't agree with her at all. Give me, says I to her, a jolly good fight between two brave Henglishmen for real enjoyment. What do you say, Mr. Percy?'

'I'm quite of your opinion, Magnum; and now let me ask you another question: What should you say if I was to tell you that a prize-fight—a real genuine prize-fight—was coming off in this very park, in front of those windows, to-morrow morning?'

'Good Evins, Mr. Percy!' replied the astonished butler, in shocked tones; 'you wouldn't go to mention a prize-fight and Primleigh Park in the same breath, sure-lie?'

'Indeed I would, though,' was the cool reply. 'Look here, Magnum! In this identical park, to-morrow morning at half-past seven o'clock or thereabouts, Dan the Dustman and Corkey Joe bring off their little mill for a hundred a-side. It was not my fault. I did not know of the fixture until too late to stop it, and I would have had nothing to do with the affair at all, only unfortunately, as it happens, I found most of the money for Corkey Joe, and have backed him heavily besides, so I naturally want to see the fight, and what is more, intend doing so, and taking you with me for protection—ch, Magnum? The question is now, how to square the old ladies! What I propose is this. You must give the alarm as soon as ever you see the first symptoms of the crowd. You'll call me up, of course. We must then—having calmed, as best we can, my two aunts—sally forth bravely, you and I, to stop the fight and order the wretches off the premises. Just as the men are about to go to work I step in and request them to stop. The manager of the whole affair—Jolly Joe Dabbs of the Rising Sun, a great pal of mine, and in the secret—won't hear of stopping the fight, uses shocking language, and insists on you and I sitting down on the straw in the inner-

ring and aiding and abetting the affair by looking on at the whole proceeding. How do you like my plan—eh, Magnum? Don't you think it's a tip-top arrangement? What?'

'Well, I never did!' replied the now grinning Mr. Magnum. 'Mr. Percy, you've took my breath away! that you 'ave, sir. To think of a prize-fight a-comin' off right slap-bang in front of your poor, dear haunts' winders! To think of you and me a-knowin' nothink at all about it—as how should we, poor hinnercent individuals?—and then for hus two to go trottin' off together to stop the fight! Haw, haw, haw!' Excuse the liberty, won't you, sir? But it beats the best joke I ever heard in my life holler, that it do.'

'Yes, it won't be a bad lark, will it, Magnum? Now I've told you all about it, and we've settled what to do, I can dress for dinner with a clear conscience. My only advice now is—keep your own counsel, and before we start in the morning see that the plate is securely locked up, for I need scarcely tell you that there will be a good many sportsmen among the crowd in my aunts' park to-morrow morning whose ideas of "*meum and tuum*" are somewhat lax, to say the least of it. Oh, and I say, Magnum, I'd leave my watch behind, too, if I were you on this occasion only,' laughed Percy, as the sensation-loving butler left the room.

CHAPTER III.

THE morning broke. It was fine, though chilly, as it usually is at that season of the year. At seven o'clock a train, evidently heavily laden, pulled up exactly opposite to Primleigh Park, just where a fir plantation bounds the line on each side. A collection of curiously attired and queer—not to say forbidding—featured passengers got out from the aforesaid train, and making a series of gaps in the fence, clamber through and gather together in a cluster on the level ground in front of the Miss Poppets' house. An aged gentleman, with a flat nose and no teeth to speak of, aided by sundry assistants, armed with mallets, drive some heavy white posts into the ground, to which are attached stout ropes. This is the ring. Two thick-set persons with very short hair, and with very ugly and forbidding countenances, then throw their respective hats into the ring, and having done that, proceed to denude themselves of their upper clothing, which, judging by the shivering and the strong language they both indulge in, seems to be rather an unpleasant operation this cold morning.

At this juncture, two figures are seen approaching from the

house. It is Mr. Percy Poppet and the butler. The former demands in a stern voice that the crowd shall instantly disperse. The burly person he addresses—none other than the Rising Sun himself—with many oaths, on behalf of himself and the company generally, declines to do so at any price—nay, more than that, he insists, with more oaths, on their stopping themselves to see the mill now they are here; ‘so that, if it *should* be a case of manslaughter arter all,’ he jocularly remarks, ‘why, you’ll be in the same boat with the lot of us, my bloomers.’

‘I say, he don’t mean that,’ whispered Magnum, rather alarmed, ‘do he, Mr. Percy?’

Curiously enough, just as the men were about to ‘toe the scratch,’ who should turn up at the ring-side, also apparently very anxious (?) to stop the fight, but the Squire of the parish, Mr. Bluerock, arm-in-arm with the Rector, the Rev. Mr. Haycock. Both were persuaded, without the least difficulty, by the Rising Sun (‘What could they do against such odds?’ observed the parson, turning up his eyes. ‘What, indeed?’ acquiesced the Squire with a grin), but to seat themselves on the straw in the inner ring beside their friend Percy and the faithful butler.

The fight commenced forthwith. It was a good one. It lasted an hour and ten minutes, and was decided by Corkey Joe knocking his man out with a flush hit on the jaw just as the partisans of the Dustman were cheering on their man with shouts of, ‘No small public-’ouse for Dustman! Large Ho-tel for Dustman!’ to, as was thought, certain victory.

Percy won a thousand pounds by the result. Magnum won five, ready-money, of which his pocket was picked five minutes afterwards. The crowd dispersed, and steamed off again to London just five minutes before the county police put in an appearance.

The two dear old aunts, who were frightened out of their lives, welcomed back Percy and the faithful butler as heroes worthy of the Victoria Cross. Praises they lavished on the former, fifty pounds they gave the latter—the pair of impostors!

Lastly, the Rev. Haycock preached a sensation sermon in the village church on the following Sunday, on the sinfulness of prize-fighting (the Squire said he ought to send it to *Bell’s Life*).

Altogether it was a ‘Merry Mill.’

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Coloured Print, 17 by 12¾ inches, £1 1s.

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY MESSRS. FORES, 41 PICCADILLY, W

FORES'S HUNTING INCIDENTS.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEASON.

By F. CECIL BOULT.

Introduces us to a charming young lady on a well-bred chestnut, preceded by a gentleman, who is a type of the old English Sporting Squire, well mounted on a clipped bay, who is opening a gate into a lane, in which are seen entering a field on the opposite side, on their way to cover, the Huntsman, Whips, and Hounds.

Size, 30 by 14 inches.

Coloured Print, £1 11s. 6d.

'HALF-A-MINUTE! AND THEN, TALLY-HO!'

By A. C. HAVELL.

Companion to the above. Here we see 'Charley' stealing out of cover. So also does the Whip, who is holding up his hand to warn the advancing field against heading him.

Size and price the same as above.

A BREAST-HIGH SCENT.

By F. CECIL BOULT.

Shows a Lady and Gentleman in a tandem dogcart pulling-up, whilst a pack of hounds in full cry crosses the road, followed by the Huntsman and field.

Size and price the same as above.

THE END OF A LONG RUN.

By BASIL J. NIGHTINGALE.

Presents us with the ultimate of the Noble Sport, 'The Death of the Fox,' who has just been rescued from the Pack with Brush, Pads, and Mask intact, the former doubtless intended for the Lady on the blown, thoroughbred-looking Hunter, which forms the centre of the picture. The Huntsman's bay and Hounds possess quality and character.

Size and price the same as above.

'HOLD HARD, GENTLEMEN!'

By F. CECIL BOULT.

Shows Hounds streaming out of covert, with the Huntsman emerging therefrom, followed by an impatient field, to whom he turns, with uplifted hand, imploring them not to overrun the hounds. Two ladies in a mail phaeton have pulled up to see the sport.

Size and price the same as above.

A Pair of upright Hunting Prints, highly coloured, from Paintings by
F. CECIL BOULT, entitled

GONE AWAY! and RUN TO EARTH!

Size, 24 by 14 inches. £2 2s. the pair.

'In "Gone Away," we are glad to find that the artist has broken the traditional method of representing the pack in a wedge-like form. There are only two and a half couple of hounds in the foreground, and they are not in conventional attitudes. The huntsman's horse is coming nearly straight on end at the spectator—a position that renders the representation of animals additionally difficult. In "Run to Earth" the master is up at the drain before the huntsman, notwithstanding an evident fall. These pictures are well coloured, and will form an acceptable addition to the hunting-man's picture-gallery, should he have any wall space to spare.'—*The Field*.

'There should be a strong demand for these in country circles as well as in sporting London.'—*Sporting Life*.

'There is a go and vividness about these that should commend them.'—*Sporting Times*.

'Will commend themselves to hunting-men.'—*Land and Water*.

'The drawings of the horses and hounds are full of life.'—*County Gentleman*.

REFUSING WATER (on the way to Covert). By Wilfrid THOMAS. A well-appointed Tandem Dogcart, with the leader refusing to cross a flooded road.

Coloured Print, 20 by 15 inches, 15s.

SUSPENSE (a likely Corner), by Cecil Boulton (companion to the above). A model 'Whip,' neat, muscular, and well dressed, mounted on a good stamp of 'Whip's horse,' at the corner of a covert where 'Charley' is likely to break. The natural and easy seat of a perfect horseman is well represented as he turns in his saddle and listens eagerly to the music of the Hounds in cover. Altogether it is one of the most sporting bits this artist has produced.

Coloured Print, 20 by 15 inches, 15s.

ANY PORT IN A STORM, by E. Caldwell (companion to the above), shows a 'Scurry' in a Strawyard consequent upon the intrusion of a beaten Fox in the midst of Pigs and Poultry, in his endeavour to escape from Hounds, by whom he is hard pressed.

Coloured Print, 20 by 14½ inches, 15s.

THE YOUNG MASTER, by A. C. Havell. Presumably the son of the M. F. H.; a youngster, hardly as yet in his teens, in the act of topping a post and rail fence. He is attired in the regulation scarlet, with leather continuations, and bestrides a cut-and-come-again-looking pony, as lively and fearless as the rider. The subject is upright and admirably foreshortened.

Coloured Print, 22½ by 15½ inches, £1 1s.

MORNING—EVENING, by A. C. Havell. A Pair of upright subjects. The first introduces us to a well-dressed sportsman on a fresh bay, proceeding leisurely to covert. In the other, the deepening shades of evening find our hero, in pouring rain, with evident difficulty consulting a sign-post as to his whereabouts; the appearance of man and horse suggests a hard day's sport.

Coloured Prints, 16 by 9 inches, £1 1s. the pair.

TOWN—COUNTRY, by Cecil Boulton. A Pair of Upright Subjects. Town shows us a well-appointed Four-in-hand being admirably 'tooled' round The Drive; the entrance to Hyde Park and Apsley House in the background. Country—a capitally foreshortened tandem dogcart 'bowling along' a country road. In each subject the post of honour beside the driver is worthily occupied by one of the fair sex.

Coloured Print, 18 by 12 inches, £1 4s. the pair.

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Price £10 10s. the Four.

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7. SADDLING. 8. A FALSE START. 9. THE RUN IN. 10. RETURNING TO WEIGH.
Price £10 10s. the four, or the Set of Ten Plates, price £26 5s.

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2. THE HUNTING STUD.

3. THOROUGH-BREDS.

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5. THE OLDEN TIME.

6. THE NIGHT TEAM.

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3. SWISHING A RASPER.

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4. IN-AND-OUT CLEVER.

6. FACING A BROOK.

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5. A RARE SORT FOR THE DOWNS.

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6. A MUTUAL DETERMINATION.

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4. HEN AND CHICKENS.

8. COW AND CALF.

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1. HUNTERS AND HACKS.

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1. A VIEW HALLOO. 2. A CHECK. 3. A HOLLOA FORWARD.
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ON THE ROAD to GRETNA, by C. Cooper Henderson.

Shows that historical vehicle, an old 'Po-Chay' and four, going at speed, with a gentleman leaning out of the window offering a purse to the Post Boys—pursuers in the distance. The stamp of Horses and character of Post Boys are admirably given by the above unrivalled painter of Coaching and Road Scenes.

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THE HUNTING SEASON IN IRELAND, a pair by

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'LOST AND FOUND,' by Stanley Berkley.

'Weary, and worn, and sad,
By the lamp's cold gleam I stand,
Waiting and watching, sighing and sighing,
For that loved and long-lost hand.'

A large Dog which has been stolen, having broken the rope which held him (a part being still round his neck), regains the door of his old home, and waits eagerly and anxiously on the doorstep in pelting rain for 'that loved and long-lost hand.' Coloured, 10½ by 8½ inches, £1 5s. Plain, 10s. 6d.

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Represents in the Firmament two lovely Female Heads (dark and fair), with flowing gauze drapery: one gazes eagerly and intently upwards, the other 'casts a longing, lingering look' below. Coloured, 11½ inches circle, £2 2s.

SHOOTING, by Basil Bradley, in four subjects, viz.

Partridge, Grouse, Wild Duck, and Woodcock, will prove acceptable to all 'gunners.' Dogs, game, and sportsmen are thoroughly well delineated by one who is evidently master of the 'business.'

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ESCAPED! A panting 'Vixen' who has doubled upon

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THE NIGHT TEAM, by C. Cooper Henderson, forms

Plate 6 of the celebrated Series of Fores's Coaching Recollections, and shows the night 'Screws' being 'put to,' the duck-toed Coachman looking to the harness, whilst the Guard affixes the lamps. This is replete with 'character,' and one of the best of the Series.

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Sheets 2, 3, 4, form a consecutive series of Twelve Hunting Incidents.

MOTHER AND CHILD, by Sir E. Landseer, R.A., a facsimile in Etching of a tinted Sketch of a well-shaped old-fashioned Hunting Mare and Foal, forming a companion to the well-known and very popular work by the same Artist, entitled

THE HUNTSMAN AND HOUNDS. Size, 14 by 10 inches.
Artist's Proofs, £2 2s. each ; Prints, £1 1s. each.

FORES'S HUNTING SCENES.

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PLATE 1.—THE FIRST INTRODUCTION TO HOUNDS.

PLATE 2.—RENEWAL OF ACQUAINTANCE WITH HOUNDS.

AN EXTRAORDINARY STEEPLE-CHASE

FOR 1000 SOVEREIGNS.

Between Mr. Geo. Osbaldeston on his 'Clasher,' and Dick Christian on Capt. Ross' 'Clinker.' From Great Dalby Windmill to within a mile of Tilton-on-the-Hill. The five miles were done in 16 minutes.

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(A SCENE ON THE ROAD.)

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EPSOM.

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- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
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Painted by C. BURTON BARBER. Engraved by F. STACPOOLE.
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Painted by C. BURTON BARBER. Engraved by W. H. SIMMONS.
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